EDUCATING THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

A CASE STUDY ON CONSULTATION, MISSION AND PLANNING

By

SEAN J. DONNELLY

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

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Project Advisor: Mark A. Latcovich

ST. MARY SEMINARY AND GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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We approve the Doctor of Ministry Project of

Rev. Sean J. Donnelly

(Signed) Mark A. Latcovich
Mentor-Advisor Rev. Mark A. Latcovich, Ph.D.

Jol C. Chlebo
Rev. John C. Chlebo, D.Min.

Mary McCormick, osu
Sr. Mary McCormick, O.S.U., Ph.D.

Date of Colloquium April 25, 2007

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Abstract

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This project was designed to research the nature and purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council, in order to educate council members, and to discover their level of understanding. The approach is that of the case study. The Parish Pastoral Council employed in the study is that of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Madison, Ohio.

The Parish Pastoral Council, of course, does not stand by itself. It is a contemporary parochial structure. By the same token, the parish does not stand by itself. The parish makes manifest something of the mystery of the Church. As such, the project grounds itself in ecclesiology. How do we understand the Church? Chapter two examines ways of understanding the Church, ultimately relying on the use of models. The models are suggested by Avery Dulles: the Church as institution, mystical communion, sacrament, herald, and servant.

Next, the institution of the parish is surveyed. A short history of the parish is presented. Then, there is a section on the theology of the parish. Yves

Congar, Karl Rahner, Domenico Grasso and others, have all attempted to analyze the parish theologically. Ultimately, one can make the case that, as with ecclesiology, the use of models is most helpful. Sabbas Kilian suggests five models, including the parish as a community gathered together to hear the word of God, and that of a community gathered together to celebrate the Eucharist.

After examining the contemporary Canon Law understanding of parish, the next section deals with the Parish Pastoral Council, as a parochial structure: its genesis, theology, codification in Church law, the concept of consultation, major pastoral concerns, and pastoral planning.

The final section of the paper (chapters three and four) reports on the research design, methodology, and findings pertinent to the case study. The aspects of the Parish Pastoral Council covered by the study are mainly three: consultation, the nature and purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council, and pastoral planning. The case study was operationalized through the use of surveys and instructional sessions.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The locus of the project is Immaculate Conception Church in Madison, Ohio. The township of Madison is located approximately 50 miles east of Cleveland, on the shore of Lake Erie. The foundation of the original Catholic mission dates to 1863. In 1934, the mission (dedicated to the Immaculate Conception) received its first resident pastor, Fr. Ludwig Virant. Fr. Virant looked to expand the small wooden church-structure on South Lake Road, by purchasing a parcel of land on Hubbard Road. In 1950, Fr. John Mulholland was appointed the next pastor. It was under his leadership that an additional parcel of land was purchased and construction of a new church was completed in 1953. Since that time there have been four more pastors. The parish has expanded from the 350 families in the 1950's, to the current size of 1400 households. The parish is mainly white, middle class, and is home to a variety of age groups. The *Status Animarum* (the annual statistical report to the diocese) indicates the annual figures for baptisms, weddings, funerals, weekend Mass attendance.[1] The parish has no day school, but maintains a Religion program of 300 students. For the past 25 years, there has been a thriving Youth Renewal program. Christ Renews His Parish (an adult program of spiritual renewal) was reactivated in 2004. There is an active St. Vincent de Paul Society, which offers material assistance to the poor.

[1] See *Status Animarum* in Appendix A, p. 115.

Since the 1950's, there have been many changes in the Church, especially concerning a more developed understanding of the role of the laity in collaborating with the pastors. Research into three decades of Immaculate Conception Church bulletins tells me that some kind of a parish council structure has been in place since the 1970's. Council members have been elected or appointed. Officers have been chosen. The council, over the years, has convened regularly. Not having been present at the council meetings from many years ago, I can only comment on how the council has functioned in recent years and, specifically, in my first 18 months. Before I arrived, the council was a viable organization with its own bylaws and meetings. The weak areas of the Parish Pastoral Council[2] have been in formation and education. Since arriving, in November of 2003, I have provided a workshop for the councilors on the nature and purpose of the PPC, with the help of the diocesan Pastoral Planning Office. I also brought a number of the council members to the Bishop's Fall Gathering for Parish Pastoral Councils. As far as I can tell, these opportunities were the first formative/educational programs to which the councilors had had any exposure.

Additionally, I have worked with the PPC to construct a diagram as to how the parish's various ministries, organizations, and commissions can be grouped together under various headings, as suggested by the Diocese of Cleveland: participating, caring, teaching, celebrating and evangelizing.[3] The PPC needs to reform its bylaws. Prayer needs to be a significant part of every

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[2] Hereafter often abbreviated as *PPC*.
[3] See Appendix B, *Parish Organizational Model*, p. 116.

meeting. In sum, the PPC at Immaculate Conception is operational, but in need of development.

The Case Study

The goal of the project is to develop the organizational structure and formation process for an existing Parish Pastoral Council that is under the direction of a new pastor. The Code of Canon Law provides for the existence of a Parish Pastoral Council, should the local Bishop decide to require one for the parishes in his diocese.[4] (Such is the case in the Diocese of Cleveland, within which the case study for this project is being accomplished). Consistent with the Code of Canon Law, the Diocesan Guidelines indicate that the function of the council is "consultative". An important thrust of the project, then, will be to educate the councilors on the nature of consultation. In order to provide a context for understanding consultation, it will be necessary to investigate what the role of the pastor is, especially as it is presented in the Code of Canon Law.

The ideas for the project are motivated by a number of hypotheses.

1. From past and present experience, it seems that the nature and purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council is not widely understood or known by parishioners in general and those holding seats on the council. One reason for this, I believe, is that there is often no education or formative process to help the councilors. I intend to develop a formation process to help fill this void.

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[4] See Canon #536 in *The Code of Canon Law Annotated*, ed. E. Caparros et al .(Montreal: Wilson and Lafleur Limitee, 1993), 394.

2. The concept of consultation, as used by the Church, is not understood by everyone in the same way. For some, the Parish Pastoral Council is strictly a forum for listening to committee reports and ideas given by the pastor. For others, the PPC is construed as merely an advice-giving body. In some cases, the opposite understanding prevails, i.e., that the PPC actually runs the parish. This is something akin to a church board of trustees that one might find in certain congregational polities.

3. Does the average parishioner or PPC member know what the obligations of a pastor are? The question is an important one. If the council is supposed to be a consultative body that assists the pastor in carrying out his canonical responsibilities, the roll of the pastor must be clarified. Of course, we are not merely dealing with Church legalities. The very last canon (#1752) puts it all in perspective. Lex suprema salus animarum ("the supreme law is the salvation of souls").[5]

4. The Code of Canon Law would seem to give the PPC an administrative function. On the other hand, there are various types of administration. The Cleveland Diocesan Guidelines speak of the important role of the council in the life of the parish, while not, strictly speaking, relegating an administrative role to it. Instead, the guidelines prefer to distinguish between acts of administration (e.g., personnel issues, scheduling and financial matters) from what are, properly speaking,

[5] Ibid., 1081.

pastoral policies and plans (which are the province of the PPC).[6] Incoming councilors must be trained to appreciate these distinctions.

5. It would seem that the important place given to the PPC in the life of the parish is not universally appreciated or understood by many parishioners. The hypothesis here is that this situation can be changed, based on giving the PPC a certain exposure to the parish (e.g., via parish elections for new councilors, publicizing PPC meeting agendas in the parish bulletin, and involving certain would-be members of the council to participate in the formation process).

6. In order to have an effective council, it is necessary to educate people on the mission of the Church. How does the parish carry out the mission of Jesus in a given geographical area? How do we relate to the larger Church and to the world? A formation process, I believe, would help councilors (and others) to understand the theological underpinnings of the PPC. Also, what is behind the lay involvement in helping a parish pastor meet his responsibilities? I believe that many lay people do not realize that such involvement is a function of their baptismal vocation, i.e., their sacramental initiation into the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ.

7. I believe that the spirituality of council members needs to be developed, lest the PPC be impeded in discerning the will of God. Having worked with hundreds of lay Catholics for almost 25 years, being "active" in the Church (in various ministries, organizations and apostolates) does not necessarily mean that there is

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[6] *Christ Calls us Together, PPC Policy for the Diocese of Cleveland* (Cleveland: 1990), 11-13.

much depth to a person's spiritual life. A PPC can only improve to the extent that councilors are people of prayer and that the council itself takes sufficient time for prayer as an integral part of what it is supposed to do for the parish.

The Specific Aims of the Project

First, I hope that the project will facilitate the development and education of the PPC of Immaculate Conception Church. With proper implementation, the project can be a vehicle for helping the council members to grow in their understanding of the place and purpose of the PPC, consultation, and pastoral planning. Educating the PPC on these areas cannot but have a parish-wide effect, because the council concerns itself with such things as program-development, ministerial initiatives, and strategies for the future, etc.

Second, I hope to make a contribution to the ministerial field. My contribution will be a published document that contains an overview of ecclesiology, especially as it has been developed by the Second Vatican Council and post-conciliar reflections. The ecclesiology will provide a basis for understanding the nature and mission of the parish. An understanding of the parish will provide the backdrop for examining the genesis and development of the PPC, as a contemporary ecclesial/parochial structure. Having established a theoretical basis for the PPC, I will include a case study which will show a pastor working with his council, in a systematic attempt to educate and form the councilors, accordingly. The project should be useful to other ministers and

interested parties who desire to find out more about the PPC. Researchers should be able to use the project as a springboard for further reflection.

Third, I hope to learn from the project. I hope to learn what I need to know about the Church, as a mystery of faith. I hope to learn about the parish as an ecclesial structure with a mission. I hope to learn about the PPC, along with the councilors. In order for me to teach about consultation, the purpose and nature of the PPC, and pastoral planning, I must learn about them first. One can learn much by preparing to teach others.

What specific outcomes do I anticipate for the success of the project? Tangible outcomes would include a revised parish mission statement, a revision of the current Immaculate Conception PPC Bylaws, and the development of a PPC calendar (used for planning purposes). The project will also provide a measurement of the councilors' understanding of consultation, pastoral planning, and the nature and purpose of the PPC.

Methodology

Three instructive in-service sessions will take place during regularly scheduled PPC meetings. The sessions will enhance the aims of the project and focus on the formation and education of PPC members.

Method of Data Collection/Analysis

Through the use of pre-test and post-test evaluative instruments, the project will measure current participants' awareness of the role of the PPC,

ecclesiology of communion, the ecclesial ramifications of their baptismal calling, the nature and meaning of parish, the activities and ministries proper to a parish, the elements of pastoral care, the concept and practice of consultation, and related concerns. The post-test instruments will measure new insights and changes in the participants' understanding of the above areas. To assist in evaluating and summarizing the data, survey responses will be appropriately coded and analyzed via the SSPS software.

Theoretical Overview and Theological Grounding

The project's theology chapter (Chapter Two of this document) will include the following issues:

1. This section will present an ecclesiology that considers the Church as communio (cf. *Lumen Gentium* and other pertinent magisterial, scriptural and theological writings). Questions to be considered include: What do we mean by the lay faithful? How do the members of the Church work together? (St. Paul says that the body is one with many members.)

2. This section will look at the theology, history and canonical perspectives on the nature and meaning of parish.

3. According to the Church's Code of Canon Law, what are the activities and ministries proper to a parish? What are parish rights and obligations? What are the proper elements of pastoral care?

4. The Code of Canon Law (#536) legislates that the PPC's establishment is left to the discretion of the local bishop. Section two of this canon states that the council has a consultative vote only. What are the scriptural, theological and magisterial underpinnings of consultation? The Church's theology of consultation includes the concepts of collaboration, communion and discernment.

5. There will be a discussion on the PPC, as it has evolved from post-Vatican II developments in ecclesiology, Church law and practice.

Time Line

1. Summer of 2005: Independent study devoted to research and composition of the theoretical section of the project ("theology chapter")

2. October 2005 to January 2006: In-service sessions of formation/education at regular PPC meetings

3. Spring of 2007: Complete the paper

CHAPTER TWO

THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

The first chapter provides an introduction to the case study at hand: Educating and Forming the Parish Pastoral Council. In order to develop the project under consideration, it is necessary to present a theology that grounds the topic. The theology serves will as an important source from which material can be drawn to assist the parish pastoral council members in their self-understanding, as disciples of Christ, members of the Church and as designated collaborators with their pastor in the important work of the parish. As such, chapter II will be divided into several sections. The first section of the paper covers the "ecclesial" context of the PPC; i.e., a discussion on the nature and mission of the Church ("ecclesiology"). The subject is an inexhaustible one because the Church, according to Catholic teaching, is a mystery of the faith.[1] However inadequate any presentation on the subject is, it is important that the topic be addressed, even if succinctly. We need not assume that a given person elected to the PPC has been educated accordingly. Ideas always have practical consequences. A poor understanding of "Church" or "parish" or "governance" can be detrimental to the life of the ecclesial community. Rev. Robert T. Kennedy puts it this way. "[T]o participate in ecclesial governance without acquired knowledge not only of

[1] See article 9, "I believe in the holy Catholic Church," of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed.*, (Washington, D.C: United States Catholic Conference, 1994), nos. 748-975.

ecclesiology, but also of governance and its manifold processes, is to imperil the ecclesial life of the community in which one governs."[2]

Having established the larger context in which to understand the PPC, the next general area of discussion is that of the parish. The questions to be examined include such things as the following. What is a parish? How did the parish develop, historically? Is there, properly speaking, a theology of parish? Who belongs to a parish? How does the PPC fit into the parish? What is the nature and function of the PPC? What is meant by the concept of consultation?

Finally, having established the consultative nature of the PPC, it will be neccssary to spend time examining the PPC's function of "pastoral planning". For, it is here, that one encounters what is specific to a PPC, vis a vis other parish groups or individuals. "The pastoral council exists to do pastoral planning."[3] What is pastoral planning? How is pastoral planning put into effect? Why is it important?

The Ecclesial Context of the Parish Pastoral Council

In his discussion of providing formation for members of a new Parish Pastoral Council ("PPC"), Michael Parise starts with educating the councilors on the pertinent sources from which we learn about the Church and its mission. He cites "sacred Scripture, sacred Tradition, the magisterium, ecumenical councils, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, canon law, universal and diocesan synodal

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[2] Robert T. Kennedy, "Shared Responsibility in Ecclesial Decision-Making," *Studia Canonica* 15 (1980), 6.

[3] John A. Renken, "Pastoral Councils: Pastoral Planning and Dialogue Among the People of God," *The Jurist* 53 (1993): 146.

documents, and so on."[4] Sacred Scripture, or the Bible, is considered by Christians to be the inspired word of God. Sacred Tradition refers to the Church's transmission of doctrine, life and worship to each generation of believers, "all that she herself [the Church] is, all that she believes."[5] The magisterium referred to above means the official teachers of the Church: the bishops in communion with the successor of the apostle Peter, the Bishop of Rome (the Pope). As the Second Vatican Council reminds us, "the task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone."[6]

Periodically, throughout the history of the Church, the Pope has authorized a convention of bishops from around the world, known as an ecumenical council. The twenty-first such council was held in the Vatican from 1963 to 1965. The council developed and approved sixteen documents on various facets of the Catholic faith and the Church's life. Especially pertinent to the purposes of PPC education and formation is the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, also known by its Latin title, *Lumen Gentium.* The document sets forth the nature, mission, and structure of the Church. It is particularly worth reviewing the document because it is solidly based in the Church's Tradition, it makes ample use of Scripture, it is magisterial, "ecumenical" and lends itself to catechetical usage (as

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[4] Michael Parise, "Forming your Parish Pastoral Council," *The Priest* (July 1995): 43-47.
[5] Austin Flannery, ed., "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation," *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Research, Inc., 1975), no. 8.
[6] Ibid., no. 10.

was done in the treatment on the subject in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*[7]).

Chapter one of *Lumen Gentium* is an excellent summary of the mystery of the Church. The Triune God did not abandon his human creatures, when they had fallen in Adam. Instead, he held out the hope of a Redeemer, whose life and ministry would call together into a holy Church, all who would believe in him. The eternal Father sends his Son to make possible this gathering of peoples, known as the Church. *Lumen Gentium* traces the mystery of the Church to the way it was founded.[8] Its foundation is everything that Jesus said and did to inaugurate the kingdom of God, namely, his preaching, his miracles, his sacrificial death and resurrection, his sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. "Henceforward, the Church, endowed with the gifts of her founder and faithfully observing his precepts of charity, humility and self-denial, receives the mission of proclaiming and establishing among all peoples the kingdom of Christ and of God, and she is, on earth, the seed and the beginning of that kingdom."[9]

In section 8 of *Lumen Gentium's* first chapter, the Church is examined as a composite of divine and human elements. It has an external visage in its visible organization, which includes its hierarchical constitution and human members. At the same time, it is endowed with heavenly riches, being so endowed and maintained by Christ, "through which he communicates his grace and truth to all

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[7] *Catechism*, nos. 748-975.
[8] Austin Flannery, ed., "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Research, Inc. 1975), nos. 1-8.
[9] Ibid., no. 5.

men."[10] Christ's Church is entrusted to the care of human shepherds. As such, the Church is modeled after the Lord's own pastoral paradigm found in Ezekiel 34 and fulfilled by Jesus' own proclamation, "I am the Good Shepherd" (cf. Jn 10.1-10). Though he is invisible, Jesus is the true head of the Church. In his capacity as head and Shepherd of the Church, he works through the ordained pastors.

The relationship between Christ and the Church is described by the use of images. John 15 uses the figure of the vine and the branches. "[T]he... vine is Christ, who gives life and faithfulness to the branches, that is, to us, who through the Church remain in Christ without whom we can do nothing...."[11] The life-giving intimacy between Christ and his Church is also conveyed using the marital imagery with which the Bible is replete. "The Church... is described as the spotless spouse of the spotless lamb (Apoc. 19.7; 21.2 and 9; 22.17). It is she whom Christ 'loved and for whom he delivered himself up that he might sanctify her' (Eph. 5.26). It is she whom he unites to himself by an unbreakable alliance, and whom he constantly 'nourishes and cherishes' (Eph 5.26). It is she whom, once purified, he willed to be joined to himself, subject in love and fidelity... in order that we may know the love of God and of Christ for us...."[12]

Another image employed by *Lumen Gentium* which both speaks of Church's relationship with God and its continuity with Israel, is "People of God". This is the subject of the document's second chapter. The new People of God is a

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[10] Ibid., no. 8.
[11] Ibid., no. 6.

priestly people, in that baptismal consecration allows each and all to participate in Christ's sacrificial self-offering. "The holy People of God shares also in Christ's prophetic office: it spreads abroad a living witness to him, especially by a life of faith and love and by offering to God a sacrifice of praise...."[13] The People of God (the Church) is one, "[although] many elements of sanctification and truth are found outside its visible confines."[14] The People of God is holy, sanctified as they are by the sacraments, ministrations of the Church and abundant charisms of the Holy Spirit.[15] The People of God is catholic. "All men are called to belong to the new People of God.... This People... is to be spread throughout the whole world and to all ages in order that the design of God's will may be fulfilled...."[16] The People of God is apostolic. "The Spirit is, for the Church and for each and every believer, the principal of their union and unity in the teaching of the apostles and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and prayer (cf. Acts 2.42 Gk.)."[17]

Notwithstanding the sound theological context provided by the Second Vatican Council, necessary for the proper understanding of People of God, there was a tendency on the part of some, in the immediate aftermath of the council, to politicize the concept. Joseph Ratzinger asserts, "In the early stages of the reception of the Council, the concept of 'People of God' predominated along with the theme of collegiality; the term 'people' was understood in terms of ordinary political usage, later in the context of liberation theology it was understood in

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[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid., no. 12.
[14] Ibid., no. 8.
[15] Ibid., no. 12.

terms of the Marxist use of the term people as opposed to the dominating classes, and even more widely, in the sense of the sovereignty of the people, which could now finally be applied to the Church."[18] The "horizontalization" of the Church's self-understanding as the People of God is not supported by any of the documents of the Second Vatican Council, which remain primarily theological ("vertical") in orientation. Interestingly, Ratzinger points out that the politicization of the term "People of God", suggesting that the Church is essentially a "democratic" organization (perhaps pitting the people against the hierarchy) was put to rest not only by sound theology, but by practical concerns, such as parish pastoral councils: "[T]hese 'verbal fireworks'... around the concept of People of God burned out, on the one hand and above all because the power games became empty and had to make room for the ordinary work in parish councils...."[19]

As it is, in the twenty years following the Second Vatican Council, at the time of the extraordinary Synod of 1985, there was an effort to sum up the ecclesiology of the council in the concept of the Church as communio. The term is Latin for *communion*. Ratzinger writes:

> All of the essential elements of the Christian concept of communio are combined in the famous text of 1 Jn 1.3, which can be taken as the criterion for the correct Christian understanding of communion: "That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you also may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ. And we are writing this that our joy may be complete." Here the starting point of communio is brought to the fore: the encounter with the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who comes to men and women through the Church's proclamation. So there arises communion among human beings, which in turn is based on

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[16] Ibid., no. 13.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Joseph Ratzinger, "The Ecclesiology of the Constitution of the Church, Vatican II, 'Lumen Gentium'," *L'Osservatore Romano* 38 (Sept. 19, 2001), 5.
[19] Ibid.

> communio with the Triune God. We have access to communion with God through the realization of the communion of God with man which is Christ in Person; the encounter with Christ creates communion with him and thus with the Father in the Holy Spirit; and from this point unites human beings with one another.[20]

The Church as a communion of persons reflects something of the Trinity. In the Godhead there is also a certain diversity of Persons, at least according to the way each of the Persons relates to the Others. The Church is also a diversified community. There is a threefold hierarchy, members of "religious" institutes, and laity. *Lumen Gentium* reviews the diversified Church makeup. There is much discussion on the role and responsibilities of bishops, who are authentic teachers of the faith. "Bishops who teach in communion with the Roman Pontiff [the Pope] are to be revered by all as witnesses of divine and Catholic truth; the faithful, on their part, are obliged to submit to their bishops' decision, made in the name of Christ, in matters of faith and morals, and to adhere to it with a ready and respectful allegiance of mind. This loyal submission of the will and intellect must be given, in a special way, to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff...."[21] Notwithstanding the prominent places of authority given to the bishops, it is their "prudent cooperators" (as the priests are called in #28 of the chapter) who have, among the hierarchy, the most direct and regular contact with the laity, particularly in parish ministry. The PPC consists largely of lay people.

Who are the laity? The document answers as follows. "The term 'laity' is here understood to mean all of the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state approved by the Church. That is, the faithful who

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[20] Ibid., 6.

by Baptism are incorporated into Christ, are placed in the People of God, and in their own way share the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ, and to the best of their ability carry on the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world."[22] The mission of the laity is both ecclesial (i.e., directed to and for the Church) and secular (i.e., pertinent to the spreading and building up of the kingdom of Christ in the world). *Lumen Gentium* speaks of the laity's right to receive in abundance the word of God and the sacraments from their pastors. Specifically pertinent to the establishment of the PPC as an officially recognized structure of the local parish is the statement, "To [their pastors] the laity should disclose their needs and desires with that liberty and confidence which befits the children of God and brothers in Christ."[23]

Post-Conciliar Reflections on Models of the Church

It has been forty years since the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council and the publication of *Lumen Gentium*. One might ask the question, what theological reflections on the nature, purpose and structure of the Church have been put forth since the council? Is there anything that can help PPC members to develop a sound ecclesiology to assist them in their deliberations? Michael Parise addresses the question in his PPC formation program. "[In] the first session… I introduced the 'models of the Church,' as described by Father Avery Dulles. PPC members needed to discover with which model they were most comfortable, as

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[21] Ibid., no. 21.
[22] Ibid., no. 31.
[23] Ibid., no. 37.

well as the relationship among the models and the need to work from a common ecclesiology."[24]

The first "model" of the Church, as presented by Avery Dulles, is the Church as institution.

> [T]he institutional vision of the Church … is… the view that defines the Church primarily in terms of its visible structures, especially the rights and powers of its officers."[25] Dulles's analysis reveals that the definition of the Church as institution, while not by any means wrong, is not sufficient, and when exaggerated, is given to distorting a balanced understanding of the Church. "If we work from the notion of Church as mystery…, we shall have a means of keeping institutionalism within proper bounds. We shall see that the Church is not primarily institution; that it does not derive all its reality and strength from its institutional features. The institutional elements of the Church must ultimately be justified by their capacity to express or strengthen the Church as a community of life, witness, and service, a community that reconciles and unites men in the grace of Christ.[26]

Dulles's next model is that of the Church as "mystical communion". Actually, there are many such models "that have as their common factor the emphasis on the communion of the members with one another and with God in Christ."[27] Several such ways of looking at the Church include: the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church as People of God, and the Church as communio. The above discussion on *Lumen Gentium* presented examples of models in the "mystical communion" category. While recognizing the virtues of such ecclesial models, Dulles sees certain defects. Left by itself, the mystical communion model can render the hierarchical and institutional structure of the Church meaningless. A model of this type can lead to divinization of the Church

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[24] Parise, "Forming your PPC," 44.
[25] Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, rev. ed. (New York, NY; Image Books, 2002), 27.
[26] Ibid., 37-38.
[27] Ibid., 49.

beyond its due (e.g., if the Church is the Body of Christ, is it equal to him), fail to give a clear sense of the Church's identity or mission, and obscure the distinction between friendly interpersonal relations and communion based on unity in God.[28]

The above two models relate to each other with a certain tension. The tension may manifest itself among members of a PPC, with some councilors tending to be "institutional" in orientation, and others tending toward looking at the primary aspect of the Church in terms of communion with others and with the Lord.

A third model that attempts to reconcile the tension is to look at the Church as sacrament. "A sacrament is, in the first place, a sign of grace. A sign could be a mere pointer to something that is absent; but a sacrament is a 'full sign,' a sign of something really present."[29] As a sacrament, the Church is both tangible and visible (the institutional or structural aspect) while containing and making present that which is invisible in and of itself: grace. "[S]acrament.... is a sign of grace realizing itself. Sacrament has an event character; it is dynamic. The Church becomes Church insofar as the grace of Christ, operative within it, achieves historical tangibility through the actions of the Church as such."[30] Dulles's evaluation of the sacramental model is generally a positive one, but he cautions the reader that "sacramentalism, carried to excess, can induce an attitude of narcissistic aestheticism that is not easily reconcilable with a full Christian commitment to social and ethical values."[31] It is certainly possible for members

[28] Ibid., 52-53.
[29] Ibid., 58.
[30] Ibid., 61.
[31] Ibid., 67.

of parish groups (PPC members included) to be inclined accordingly. The Church is beautiful and full of mystery, but there is a mission to be done.

A fourth model, which departs from an institutional or sacramental understanding of the Church is that of herald. Instead, the model emphasizes the word of God as what is constitutive of the Church. Referring to the work of Karl Barth, Dulles writes, "The word of God is not a substance immanent in the Church, but rather an event that takes place as often as God addresses his people and is believed. The Church therefore is actually constituted by the word being proclaimed and faithfully heard. The Church is the congregation that is gathered by the word—a word that ceaselessly summons it to repentance and reform."[32] Catholics, particularly those involved in lay leadership, Church ministries and PPC's, need to allow for regular exposure to the word of God. And yet, as Dulles reminds the reader, "It is not enough to speak of the word of God, for Christianity stands or falls with the affirmation that the Word has been made flesh.... Here the reader would do well to recall de Lubac's remarks about how Christ perpetuates not only his doctrine and his work in the Church, but shares with it his very being."[33] Additionally, writes Dulles, "A... criticism that is voiced by Catholics... with regard to this type of ecclesiology is that it focuses too exclusively on witness to the neglect of action." [34] Members of parish pastoral councils ought to be able both to witness to their faith and apply their own formation to the important work of the council, which concerns the building of the kingdom of God (faith in action).

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[32] Ibid., 69-70.
[33] Ibid., 77.

Whereas the model of the Church as herald focuses on the Christian community's proclamation and dialogue with the word of God, the fifth model, that of servant, focuses on the Church's orientation to the world. "The theological method accompanying this type of ecclesiology.... may be called 'secular-dialogic': secular because the Church takes the world as a properly theological focus, and seeks to discern the signs of the times; dialogic, because it seeks to operate on the frontier between the contemporary world and the Christian tradition (including the Bible), rather than simply apply the latter as a measure of the former."[35] The Church-as-servant ecclesiology makes up for any deficiencies in the four other models' stance toward the world, as the arena for engagement and service. Citing Cardinal Cushing, former Catholic Archbishop of Boston, Dulles writes, "Jesus came not only to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom, he came also to give himself for its realization. He came to serve, to heal, to reconcile, to bind up wounds.... "[36] Since the Second Vatican Council, there has been much emphasis on the Church as servant. Yet the servant-model is not sufficient by itself. One of the weaknesses of the model is that the distinctive mission and identity of the Church can be obscured. Although the Church does do much good for the world, it is far more than a social-service organization with a religious veneer, as some PPC members and parishioners might be inclined to think. Additionally, the servant-model, embraced by itself, can result in Church

[34] Ibid., 79.
[35] Ibid., 84.
[36] Ibid.

members uncritically accepting secular values, thus compromising their distinctive witness to Christ.[37]

It is clear from the above evaluation of five types of Church models, that because the Church is a mystery, no one model suffices. Each captures an important aspect of the Church's nature, structure, or mission. Since the original publication of Dulles's Models of the Church, in 1974, he added an appendix to the work which summarizes the ecclesiology of Pope John Paul II. The author examines the operative models used by the Pope.

> In his writings on the Church... John Paul II shows an awareness of the various ecclesial 'models' operative in the council documents. Partly because of his philosophical background, he exhibits a marked preference for communio model, but he expounds it in a way that takes cognizance of the merits of other models, such as those depicting the Church as institution, sacrament, herald and servant. With his personalist orientation, Wojtyla clearly subordinates the institutional and the external to the communal and the spiritual. But he also uses the category of sacramentality to integrate the visible and invisible, the external and the internal....[38]

At the same time, the Pope has a clear sense of the Church's mission and ministry. Dulles writes:

> Because he is convinced of the inseparability of being from acting, and because he sees the entire Church in a state of mission, John Paul II attaches great importance to the action of the Church ad extra, including its functions of evangelization, dialogue, and social healing. All of these functions, he holds, overlap and interpenetrate. The Church evangelizes when it enters into dialogue; it transforms society when it proclaims the gospel.[39]

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[37] Ibid., 187.
[38] Ibid., 240.
[39] Ibid.

The Parochial Context of the Parish Pastoral Council

The History of the Parish

In order to understand the immediate ecclesial context of the PPC, it is helpful to start with a brief history of the parish as a Church institution. The importance of history in treating of the parish is key to understanding what a parish is and why it developed. "The parish, as it is known today, is not a biblical datum, but a product of history."[40] Having stated this, the history of the parish as a subject of academic research is one that has not been extensively addressed by scholars. In fact, as James Coriden testifies, "[t]he history of the parish has not yet been written. There is no adequate, comprehensive history of Christian parishes. This is truly remarkable for a church that is essentially communal, that is, made up of local communities of believers. The story of the local congregation – their origins, size, activities, inner dynamics and how they responded to the religious needs of their members – has not yet been told."[41]

The best one can do is to sketch the development of the parish, as we know it today, from its historical forerunners. Coriden begins with etymology. The word "parish" is a rough English equivalent to the original Greek term paroikia. The root, oikos, is the Greek word for house. Paroikia meant "those living near or beside". People living in a paroikia were people who lived together, perhaps in the same neighborhood. "Local Christian congregations began to be called 'parishes' [paroikiai] as early as the second century."[42]

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[40] Sabbas J. Kilian, *Theological Models for the Parish* (New York: Alba House, 1977), 3.
[41] James A. Coriden, *The Parish in Catholic Tradition: History, Theology and Canon Law* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997), 18.
[42] Ibid., 19.

Corriden notes that at this stage of history, the term "parish", meaning local congregation, was often interchanged with "diocese" (meaning a cluster of local churches with the bishop as its head). The terms were somewhat fluid (examples of this fluidity can be found in some documents until the thirteenth century).[43] When paroikia (or paroecia, in Latin) was used to mean a local congregation, the modern reader must not understand it to imply that people living in these "parishes" lived within a territorial area as determined by Church law, which was not yet codified. Prior to the Emperor Constantine's Edict of Milan (314 A.D.), the Church had no legal recognition in the Roman Empire. There were no public church buildings. Christians met for worship wherever they could do so unmolested. Once the Peace of Constantine was effected, the formalization of local Church structures was allowed to take place. Coriden writes, "From a status of suspicion, toleration and occasional outright persecution, the Christian congregations now enjoyed freedom, security and even favor. Confiscated property was restored, personal sanctions were lifted and bishops were given positions of prominence and influence. The emperor aided the church in many ways. For instance, he constructed splendid church buildings... in Rome and in other cities of the empire."[44]

With the radical change in the political environment, the Church grew in membership. Christianity eventually became the major religion of the Roman Empire. Coriden suggests that by the fourth and fifth centuries, Church congregations were formed in at least five different ways. There were "city-

[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid., 22.

churches" authorized and governed by the bishops. Meanwhile, the faithful in hamlets or villages were cared for by itinerant pastors from the city-churches. (One might call these "rural parishes".) Monasteries often maintained small congregations. Early parishes were also developed at various shrines and oratories. Sometimes large estates built churches to serve the needs of those who lived on the lands.[45] Sabbas Kilian comments on the early development of Church-communities from the fifth and sixth centuries on. Specifically referring to the rural "parish" as described above, he writes: "Though these all were forerunners of parish structures, they were not full-fledged parishes. Either they were still integral parts of the bishop's city-parish, consequently their pastors' powers were greatly restricted by the bishop, or interference on the part of the nobles who usually owned the churches hindered both the appointment of the local priest by and [sic] his ecclesial relationship with the bishop."[46]

Coriden speaks about the development of "baptismal churches".

> Baptismal churches (ecclesiae baptismales) were those churches that possessed a baptistry and where baptisms were administered. They were the more important churches, found in principal locations, and their territory was extensive. Often they were headed by an archpresbyter (the arch meant "chief" or "ranking"). The baptismal churches were analogous to the churches headed by the bishops in the cities, and they became the characteristic feature of a system of parishes that began to develop in the sixth century. This evolution marked a process of decentralization within dioceses.[47]

Baptismal churches, which prevailed in rural areas of north and western Europe were to be distinguished from the lesser churches (e.g., shrines, private oratories, monastery chapels) that were not permitted to celebrate baptisms or the Eucharist

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[45] Ibid., 23-24.
[46] Kilian, *Theological Models*, 3.

on major feasts (when the faithful were obliged to attend the baptismal churches).[48]

Coriden points out that from the eighth century, the local congregations became, in effect, a part of the feudal system in agrarian Europe. The priest, the church building, and the land on which the church was located, were subordinated to a local lord. Here, the priest was viewed as one of the vassals. He received an income and protection from the lord, in exchange for homage, fealty and service. Developing from the "proprietary church" system, in which the churches were privately owned by the lords, came the so-called "benefice" system, in which the parish churches were looked upon as sources of income for the clergy, rather than as communities for the spiritual welfare of the faithful. Coriden suggests, though, that the benefice system, which was in effect for many centuries, was an improvement on the proprietary churches because the latter were not under the control of the bishops. Returning control of the parishes to the local bishops (from the undue influence of the landlords and civil rulers) took many centuries.[49] Coriden addresses the impact upon parish life associated with major Church reform, from the eighth to the sixteenth centuries. The first such major reform was the Carolingian Reform (between 750 and 900). The reform initiative was named for the imperial dynasty of Charlemagne. The Carolingian rulers sought to stabilize and reform the Holy Roman Empire by ensuring that the Church itself was well established and able to function effectively. "One of their reforming principles was to establish a church, its endowment and a priest in every village.

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[47] Coriden, *The Parish in Catholic Tradition*, 25.
[48] Ibid.

To a remarkable extent they succeeded, and the system of parishes that they set up endured for centuries in western Europe, through the darkest times of feudal disruption and chaos."[50]

As the centuries progressed, there were more initiatives to reform the Church, which focused, at least in part, on parish-reform. For example, in 1215, Pope Innocent III summoned hundreds of bishops, abbots and priors of religious houses for an important ecumenical council. It would be the twelfth, in history of the Church. It is known as the Fourth Lateran Council. Coriden assesses the abiding importance of the council on parish life.

> [The Fourth Lateran Council] included provisions for parish life that are part of the church's discipline to this day. For example, the council enjoined every Christian to annual confession, to Easter communion and to the observance of marriage regulations. It called for better preaching, pastoral care of the sick, improved education for those to be ordained priests, moral integrity in those placed in charge of churches, observance of clerical celibacy and sobriety, and a regular visitation of every parish by the diocesan bishop. The council forbade anyone to have more than one benefice that involves the care of souls. This series of reform decrees indicates the presence of abuses at the parish level at this time, but it also shows an awareness of the importance of a sound parish life, a healthy and nourishing relationship between the people and their pastor.[51]

In the sixteenth century, the Catholic Church was moved to clarify various doctrines and practices to meet the challenge posed by the Protestant Reformation. It was time for another ecumenical council. Pope Paul III convoked the council in 1545. This gathering of bishops, and other prelates is known as the Council of Trent. Trent is known for clarifying many points of doctrine; including the nature of the Mass, justification, specifying that there are

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[49] Ibid., 26-29.
[50] Ibid., 30.
[51] Ibid., 31.

seven sacraments, and even enumerating the canon or list of sacred books that are to be included in the Old and New Testaments. Trent provided a comprehensive treatment of Catholic faith and discipline. The council required 18 years to complete its work (although there was a ten year interruption), and 25 sessions. Included among its many pronouncements is a key piece of legislation that would abide for centuries. The legislation concerns the parish. Sabbas Kilian cites the pertinent text from chapter 13 of the council's 24th session.

> ...In those cities and localities where the parochial churches have no definite boundaries, and whose rectors have not their own people whom they rule but administer the sacraments indiscriminately to all who desire them, the holy council commands the bishops that, for the greater security of the salvation of souls committed to them, they divide the people into definite and distinct parishes and assign to each its own and permanent parish priest, who can know his people and from whom alone they may licitly receive the sacraments or that they make other more beneficial provisions as the conditions of the locality may require. They shall also see to it that the same is done as soon as possible in those cities and localities where there are no parish churches; any privileges and customs whatsoever, even though immemorial, notwithstanding. [52]

Kilian refers to the above legislation as the parochial principle. In other words, it was the council of Trent that "canonized" the institution of the territorial parish. Kilian comments:

> Evidently, wherever the parochial principle had not been in use before the Council of Trent, the faithful must have encountered great difficulties in being provided with the sacraments. The root of the problem was twofold. Either no parish church was available to the faithful or no parish priest was permanently assigned to the parish with direct pastoral care for the parishioners. The above text was intended to solve both these problems by demanding precise territorial limits for each parish and by entrusting its permanent care to one priest-pastor with the provision that he reside in the parish, be bound to preach and to take care of the religious education of the youth.[53]

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[52] Kilian, *Theological Models*, 6.
[53] Ibid., 6-7.

Theology of the Parish

The definition of a parish as a territorial division of a diocese, to which a priest is assigned as the resident pastor, is reformulated in the Catholic Church's Code of Canon Law. The code was first published in 1917. In examining what Church legislation had to say about the parish (cf. canon 216), Charles Davis finds that the canonical definition is inadequate to serve as a basis for theological reflection, because, in his estimation, the code does not go far enough in its definition of what a parish is.

> The office of parish priest and the territory over which it is exercised: these are what is meant by a parish in present canon law. The people are not included as a constitutive element. This terminology of the code reflects, as the Code does in many other respects, an inadequate ecclesiology, an ecclesiology that is onesidedly clerical and concerned almost exclusively with hierarchical functions, and which does not give proper consideration to the community and to the function of the laity.[54]

Davis' solution to what he sees as the inadequacy of the code's definition of the parish is to explore the possibility of theological reflection on the parish that includes the people as an important constitutive element. Building on the ideas of Alex Blochlinger, Davis distinguishes five attempts to build a theology of the parish.[55]

The first such attempt is to base a theology of the parish on the basis of the first Church community of Jerusalem.

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[54] Charles Davis, "The Parish and Theology," *Clergy Review* 49 (May 1964), 269.
[55] Cf. Alex Blochlinger, *The Modern Parish Community* (New York, NY: P.J. Kenedy and Sons, 1965), 120-151.

> A close parallel is drawn between the first community and the parish. All the elements of the parish were at Jerusalem; the determinate territory was the city of Jerusalem; the church was the upper room; Peter was the pastor; there were the community of believers, the activities of preaching and the sacraments and the works of charity. Particular stress is laid on the fact that all the members of the community knew one another, from which an argument is drawn that parishes must be small, so that all the parishioners can be known to one another.[56]

Davis criticizes the above attempt for being anachronistic and inadequate. The original Jerusalem community would have been headed by a bishop. It had no fixed territorial limits. Peter was not a "parish priest". And even from the point of view of the community, the Jerusalem paradigm is insufficient. "[U]nderlying the view is the identification of the parish with the genuine Christian community formed by the devout of the parish; the parish, however, includes the slack and the lapsed."[57]

The second attempt at "theologizing" the parish is the theory that the parish is an ecclesiola in Ecclesia (the Church in miniature). Here, it is assumed, what is true of the Church as a mystery of the faith, is true of the parish, only on a small scale. If Jesus is the Bridegroom of the Church (cf. Eph 5), it can be said that there is a nuptial relationship between the bishop and his diocese and between the parish priest and his parish. Is this a realistic vision of the Church? Davis cautions the reader by stating: "[I]t must be remembered that the bishop and Christ are not two parallel entities, but the bishop is but the sacramental representation of Christ. It is stated, for example, that as all the life in the Church comes from the one Christ; so in the parish all the Christian life comes from the one parish priest, and the attempt is made to support this contention from the

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[56] Davis, "The Parish and Theology," 271.

functions that are reserved to the parish priest."[58] Besides making the priest into a "self-sufficient spiritual father", Davis contends that there is a more fundamental weakness in looking at the parish as the Church in miniature. "The main weakness of the view is that it makes the parish a community standing on its own, a closed concentric circle within the diocese and the Church. That is not true. The parish is essentially incomplete and open to the diocese and the bishop."[59]

A third view which attempts to provide a theology for the parish is that expressed by Yves Congar. Congar sets up an analogy to make his point. The parish is to the diocese as the family is to the state. The idea is that the Christian is born into the Church by way of the maternal womb of the parish, as a citizen is born into the state by way of the family. Davis suggests, "In earlier times, the maternal character of the diocese was far more strongly marked than it is today. For a long time, both baptism and preaching were reserved to the bishop."[60] Davis' main criticism, though, is that Congar's view does not provide a properly theological statement on the parish. "Whether the analogy between the parish-diocese relation and the family-State relation has a practical value in understanding and further developing the present relation between the parish and the diocese... is a question for the sociology not the theology of the parish."[61] Davis levels the same critique concerning Congar's attempt to explain the community structure of the parish. Congar's explanation, says Davis, is of much value, but it does not allow for a properly theological explanation. "The

[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid., 272.
[59] Ibid., 273.
[60] Ibid., 275.

community structure does not follow from a theology of the parish, but is laid down [by Congar] as a postulate of apostolic activity. Whether a parish is a community and, if not, under what conditions it may possibly become a genuine community is for religious sociology to decide."[62]

Davis reviews a fourth attempt to develop a theology of the parish. This time, he looks at a couple of theses proposed by Karl Rahner. The first is that the manifestation of the Church as an event is necessarily a local community. Further, the local community is realized most fully in the celebration of the Eucharist. Rahner's second thesis is that the parish is the primary realization of the community that is actualized in the Eucharist. Davis states, "What Rahner has given us, I suggest, is a theology of the local community, not a theology of the parish as such. The local community may not be a parish, as he himself is aware in part.... The original form of the local community is rather the episcopal community with the priests gathered as a group around the bishop and assisting him to serve the needs of the community."[63] Furthermore, Davis suggests, it is important to understand that baptism fundamentally unites one to the universal Church. And even the liturgy has as its primary aim to unite people together into a community that is not restricted by limitations of locality. Besides, he asks, what about non-parishioners participating in the Eucharist? Their presence and participation in the Mass does not make them a member of the local parish community. "To suppose that the liturgy of itself will form our parishes into

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[61] Ibid., 276.
[62] Ibid., 276-277.
[63] Ibid., 279.

genuine communities in the sociological sense is to misunderstand the nature of the liturgy and to fall into a false supernaturalism."[64]

The fifth attempt at a theology of the parish is provided by Domenico Grasso. Grasso contends that the theology of the parish is possible if one looks at it as a part of the diocese. The parish itself is of ecclesiastical institution, the diocese, on the other hand, is properly speaking an object of theology. Davis disagrees with Grasso's analysis, pointing out that it is not possible to divide a supernatural reality into parts.

> When the Church exists in a given place or is realized in a local Eucharistic community, it is the whole mystery of the Church that is rendered present, concentrated in a given place, concentrated in a given event, manifested there in the totality of its mystery. We should avoid speaking of the diocese, let alone of the parish, as a member or part of the body of Christ, which itself transcends time and place, made present at a given time and place. And if the diocese calls for special theological treatment as an essential part of the sacramental structure of the Church, the parish does not, because it is a matter of human, ecclesiastical organization.[65]

To conclude, Davis presents a negative evaluation of attempts to find a theology of the parish. He denies that such a thing is possible. "There is no theology of the parish as such. There is a theology of the local community that exists de facto in the context of the parish. There is a theology of the Church, both as a sacramental and hierarchical structure and as an inner reality, the Church which is present and active in the parish. And the parish itself fulfills the

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[64] Ibid., 281.
[65] Ibid., 283.

theological demand that the Church should embody itself in concrete, social forms adapted to human life....'"[66]

Sabbas Kilian proposes a solution to the apparent difficulty of creating a theology for the parish. Taking a cue from Avery Dulles, he proposes the use of theological models. Whereas Dulles applied them to the mystery of the Church per se (see above, pp. 8-13), Kilian employs them to the parish. "Because we believe that 'the method of models or types... can have great value in helping people to get beyond the limitations of their own particular outlook, and to enter into fruitful conversation with others having a fundamentally different mentality,' we feel that, by working out theological models for the parish, we are reaching out and actually creating a positive and constructive basis for imaginative reflection."[67] The use of models has a certain flexibility that is not found in various attempts to impose one kind of theological understanding on the Church or parish. One reason for this is that the term model is applied in a twofold sense. Kilian explains that a model is "[f]irst... an exemplar to be imitated since it is rooted and expressed, as the image of the ineffable, in biblical and patristic understanding of God's intervention in history and humanity's response to it in religious practices. At the same time, model also signifies a pattern of something to be done, to operate, to be made. Consequently, a theological model has both historical and eschatological functions...."[68] Furthermore, the methodology of models is such that no one model is sufficient by itself. Quoting Dulles, Kilian writes, "It goes without saying that none of the models should ever be applied in

[66] Ibid.
[67] Kilian, *Theological Models*, 51.

isolation of or in contradistinction to the rest of the models. A healthy parish-community thrives on all of them, though in different degrees and to different extents, always giving prominence to the one or ones which best respond to its particular need, background, culture, etc. Whenever one deals with models, it is dangerous to think in either/or dichotomies or to claim exclusivity for one at the expense of the others."[69]

Kilian's first theological model is that of the parish being a community gathered together to hear the word of God. Citing the Second Vatican Council's *Decree on the Life and Ministry of Priests*, Kilian writes: "'The people of God is gathered into one first of all through the Word of the living God.' The creative word of God uttered at the beginning of time and bringing forth the entire universe became the re-creating, regenerating Word of God in the process of salvation. Whenever it is proclaimed it can create a community and make it the carrier of salvific proclamation..." [70] Kilian demonstrates the power of the word by examining its community-forming effect, as presented in the Bible. "In the Judeo-Christian economy of salvation the Word of God has always played an extraordinary and fundamental role. In the Old Testament, it was the Word of creation and the Word of the covenant that established the universe, called the human race into existence, chose and held the people of Israel together."[71] The ministry of the word was continued by Jesus and the Church. "Go out into the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation" (Mt 28.18).

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[68] Ibid., 51-52.
[69] Ibid., 156.
[70] Ibid., 56.
[71] Ibid., 54.

How is the parish a community formed by the word of God? "The Word of God is present and acts in the Church in many ways but especially in her liturgical celebrations. It is here that the Church realizes herself, becomes most completely what she is. And in this activity, Bible readings, biblical chants, and biblical commentary as well as the looser use of biblical formulas which pervades every rite, occupy such a permanent place that the liturgy has been rightly termed the 'Bible in action'."[72] Kilian adds that the private reading of the Bible extends the liturgical experience of the word of God throughout the week. To emphasize the point, Kilian concludes, "The parish either thrives on it [i.e., the word of God] or merely stagnates and slowly dies.... It is on the parish-level that the realization of such a fundamental understanding of Christianity must find its concrete forms in different places and at different times. Hearing the word of God and responding to it, however, remains a constant in every form in all places and at all times. Without it the very being of the parish-community would actually be destroyed."[73]

A theological model not only describes what ought to be, but also challenges. Kilian writes: "[I]t is at least questionable whether the proclamation of the Kerygma and learning as a life-long characteristic of the Christian-catechumen have not been neglected and practically even denied in the modern and contemporary Church.... Certain features of the contemporary Church seem to indicate that this unfortunate situation is already an established fact."[74] Kilian gives examples of aspects of parish life that have been adversely affected by what

[72] Ibid., 56.
[73] Ibid., 70.

he sees as a neglect in reliance upon the word of God for personal formation and community-building: the lack of biblical themes in preaching, the precarious state of the Catholic school and the CCD program (with the sacrament of confirmation regarded by many as the end of their religious formation), etc. A parish steeped in the word of God is a vibrant one. One could also say this about any parish group, including the Parish Pastoral Council.

Kilian's second model is that of the parish as a community gathered together to celebrate the Eucharist. The Sacrament of the Deed, as he calls it, follows upon and completes the Sacrament of the Word. The Eucharist makes Christ and his saving sacrifice present. "The documents of Vatican II... have... defined the parish in its Eucharistic role and function, indicating the Eucharist's centrality in the life of the Christian community. The Council fathers felt so strongly about it that they did not hesitate to state clearly and unmistakably that 'no Christian community... can be built up unless it has its basis and center in the celebration of the most Holy Eucharist'."[75] History certainly shows that the unity of the Church was maintained by the regular celebration of the liturgy, beginning with the whole of the Church community in a given city or parish gathered with the bishop for the Sunday Mass. Joseph Powers comments: "It was only in the 5th century that it became acceptable to celebrate another Mass for those who could not be present at the Eucharist of the bishop, indeed even to celebrate at the bishop's altar."[76] Modern circumstances usually do not allow for a single celebration of the Eucharist at the altar of the bishop to include all of the faithful.

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[74] Ibid., 60.
[75] Ibid., 74.

Most Catholics participate in the Eucharist in their particular parishes, with their bishop's representative, the parish priest ("pastor") or his vicar ("associate pastor"). Each parish participates in the same mystery in union with millions of members of the Body of Christ dispersed throughout the world. Even in the liturgical multiplicity, there is unity.

Kilian concludes:

> Can we have a better image of the Eucharist than this pulsating heart of the celebrating Christian community? Faith and love, the circulating blood that keeps the Christian alive and going, originates therein and" returns to it for new pumping, for new mission. And in between pumpings it carries Christ's spirit on highways and byways to dispense Him as the source of energy and to draw all men to Him, the cause and sign of unity. Yes, the Eucharistic communion is the most fitting model of parish-community for it symbolizes the here-and-now implementation of God's saving power for mankind.[77]

Although the PPC does not normally take the place of a parish's "liturgy commission", it is advisable that the councilors have a basic understanding and appreciation for the place of the Eucharist in the life of the parish. The councilors' regular participation in the liturgy, their devotion to the Eucharist, and a deep sense for the Church as a Eucharistic communion, all need to be fostered and encouraged in any PPC formation program.

The third model to consider is that of the parish as a local organization of the universal Church. Kilian builds on the previous models, rooting the present model in a requirement of the human condition.

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[76] Ibid., 74-75l
[77] Ibid., 87-88.

> [A]s the community of the Word-of-God model leads to the community of the Eucharist-model, the two together must lead to their complementary counterparts, the models rooted in the human condition of man. These latter are simply necessary steps – not superior models – in the development and understanding of the parish as the conscious local self-actualization of the universal Church. As such, they can never replace the first two primary models of the parish dictated by the divine-revelatory constitutive element of the Church. But they can contribute greatly to their proper functioning and effective application by molding, conditioning, organizing, and making available the human element as the proper vehicle of the divine in the forming of the parish community.[78]

The model under discussion, and two subsequent ones proposed by Kilian, are attempts to bridge the gap between the Church as mystery of faith and present day ecclesial structures, such as the parish or organizations within the parish (such as the PPC). One might call such an approach an example of incarnational theology. Kilian writes: "[I]t can be stated plainly... that on the parish level the presence of non-Christian, and at times possibly anti-Christian or even atheistic convictions and attitudes is evident. Christians of faith and conviction live and work together with sociological Christians, religiously unintcrested individuals. Hence, if there is anything the parish can offer these people, it is the God who reveals Himself in the human condition rather than the God of positive revelation...."[79] Kilian concludes by suggesting that the parish is worthy of theological reflection because it is also a genuine milieu of the human condition. The human condition, Kilian suggests, does not exclude the supernatural reality of God. "On the contrary," he remarks, "it is a revelatory agent of the transcendent."[80] And whereas the atheist or the anti-Christian may not understand

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[78] Ibid., 88-89.
[79] Ibid., 44.
[80] Ibid.

the human condition or parish structure as "revelatory agent", there are people who have the necessary faith to appreciate it. "[O]nly those who listen to the Word and celebrate the Eucharist can really know the value and need of human structure in the service of the community. Only they are really aware of the fact that the Kingdom needs them as its signs for its progressive and fuller realization."[81] Members of the PPC must be people of faith, committed to the word of God and to the Eucharist.

The fourth model examined by Kilian is based on the work of Michael Winter.[82] The model is entitled: "the parish is a community restructured into small communities". The model, Winter believes, responds to the contemporary "post-Christian" world in a way that the current parish structure does not. The restructuring proposed is that of an ecclesial body consistent of a number of "basic communities" of twenty to thirty people. The Eucharist is celebrated in these community settings with occasional "city-wide" liturgies and Masses celebrated with the bishop. The model effectively eliminates the "territorial" parish is it is known today, in favor of what Winter believes to be a more effective structure for the contemporary world. For the purposes of the Doctor of Ministry project, the model proposed by Winter, which would dictate a vast restructuring of dioceses and parishes, is valuable not so much in itself, as in what it aims to

[81] Ibid., 91.
[82] Michael M. Winter, *Blueprint for a Working Church – A Study in New Pastoral Structures* (St. Meinrad, IN: Abbey Press, 1973).

accomplish, namely that a parish "'must be a community of worship, charity, witness, and apostolate'."[83] Kilian comments:

> The details of what [Winter] says in his book may be ignored or seriously questioned by the reader; the model itself, however, must be recognized as highly realistic and rooted in the correct understanding of vital issues of human and Christian life on two grounds. It is a positive response, first, to the demands of the interlocking reality of the human condition and divine revelation and, second, to the pressures of the contemporary understanding of the mission of the Church.[84]

Winter's thesis serves as a reminder that a structure, such as a parish, is not an end in itself. Structures are needed, but they must be adequate to the challenges posed by a largely de-Christianized world.

Canonical Implications

It is clear, from the above discussion, that it is possible to develop a theology of the parish, which respects its communitarian nature, through the use of *models*. Kilian's use of models rectifies the claims of Charles Davis, that it is not possible to provide a theology of parish. Kilian's presentation, although written before the 1983 revision of the Church's *Code of Canon Law*, anticipates it in at least one important respect: the definition of the parish, now includes the people (the community). Charles Davis had lamented the 1917 Code's failure to define the parish as primarily a community.[85] Since Davis' reflection (published in 1964), there has been much development in articulating the nature of the parish. Specifically, there are now the various documents of the Second Vatican

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[83] Kilian, *Theological Models*, 104.
[84] Ibid., 111.
[85] See 1917 *Codex Iuris Canonici*, canon 216.

Council, and a new revised Code of Canon Law (1983), which is a fruit of the council.

What does the 1983 revision of the Code of Canon Law have to say about the parish? There are 38 "canons" or laws which make up chapter VI of the code, entitled, Parishes, Pastors and Parochial Vicars. Of particular pertinence to the present discussion are two specific canons, numbers 515 and 518. James Coriden cites canon 515. "Now, in the revised Code, a parish is defined as a community of Christian people. Canon 515 states: 'A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church; the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop'."[86] Coriden points out that the present code now defines a parish as something more than a territory (although canon 518 does state that a parish normally embraces all of the faithful in a given territory). A parish is even more than a "portion of the people of God" (which is the way a diocese is defined), and more than merely a random gathering of people. The key word is community. "Community means a group of individuals and families who know each other, share common values and relate with one another. They live near each other in a neighborhood or part of town. Or, in the case of personal, non-territorial parishes, they are united by language, ethnic origin or some other common interest."[87] To say that a parish is a definite (i.e., defined) community entrusted to a pastor, is a development in Church law. Coriden comments, "The

[86] James Coriden, *The Parish in Catholic Tradition*, 60.
[87] Ibid.

identity of the parish in the revised canons is clearer and more accurate than ever before."[88]

The Parish Pastoral Council

Genesis

"Even though the phenomenon of parish councils appeared in the wake of Vatican II, it should be noted that the documents of the council do not speak of, much less mandate, the existence of parish councils. Although there is no explicit reference to them in the teaching of the council, it would be unfair, however, to say that parish councils simply appeared on the scene 'out of thin air'."[89] John Keating cites the several specific passages of the Vatican council's documents that are germane to the development of the PPC. One is the passage from the *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* (no. 26), which recommends the establishment of a council to coordinate various diocesan organizations. The document suggests that such a council might be established even on a parochial level. "Commentators on Vatican II are agreed that this reference really does not speak of parish councils, but refers to an interorganizational board to promote coordination of effort."[90]

The Second Vatican Council did envision a pastoral council, but only on the diocesan level. Keating cites the Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office (no. 27):

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[88] Ibid., 59.
[89] John Keating, "Consultation in the Parish," *Origins*, Oct. 11, 1984, 89.
[90] Ibid., 260.

"It is highly desirable that in each diocese a pastoral council be established over which the diocesan bishop himself will preside and in which specially chosen clergy, religious and lay people will participate. The function of this council will be to investigate and to weigh matters which bear on pastoral activity and to formulate practical conclusions regarding them."[91] Keating suggests that more pertinent to the creation of PPC's is the now-famous reference contained in section number 37 of the *Dogmatic Constitution of the Church* (also known as *Lumen Gentium*): "An individual layman, by reason of knowledge, competence or outstanding ability which he may enjoy, is permitted and sometimes even obliged to express his opinion on things which concern the good of the church. When occasions arise, let this be done through the agencies set up by the church for this purpose...."[92]

In 1973, the Catholic Church published two important documents pertinent to the establishment of PPC's. In January of that year, the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy sent a circular letter to bishops throughout the world. The letter is entitled *Omnes Cristifideles*.[93] The point of the letter is to present the pastoral council as a new consultative body for the diocesan bishop. The document discusses the composition of the council (most of which members should be from the laity), the consultative nature of the council, and the type of issues that are appropriate for council members' deliberation. The document is important because "[i]t was the only post-conciliar document to deal exclusively with pastoral councils, and it was the first document to mention parish (and

[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid.

regional) pastoral councils."[94] Later, in 1973, the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for Bishops published *Ecclesiae Imago*, which discussed the relation of the PPC and the diocesan pastoral council:

> To make the [diocesan pastoral] council's work more effective, the bishop can order, if the good of the faithful requires it, that in every parish, among the other offices of the apostolate, parish pastoral councils be set up and that these be aligned with the diocesan council. These councils, grouped together according to areas, could choose their representatives to serve on the diocesan council, so that the whole diocesan community may feel that it is offering its cooperation to its bishop through the diocesan council.[95]

Theology

Behind the development of the pastoral council (whether diocesan or parochial), is the theology of the Second Vatican Council. William Rademacher comments:

> Vatican II... provide[s] us with the broad themes that rightly lead to the formation of parish councils. One such theme is the image or model of the church as the people of God. This model is described at length in the second chapter of the Constitution on the Church, entitled, "The People of God." Fr. Avery Dulles, S.J., in his book Models of the Church, explains the historical development of this model in his chapter, "The Church as Mystical Communion."[96]

Rademacher isolates eight theological themes of the ecumenical council, which, he believes, have special application to the PPC.

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[93] See "Patterns in Local Pastoral Councils" in *Origins* 3 (1973), 186-191.
[94] John A. Renken, "Pastoral Councils: Pastoral Planning and Dialogue Among the People of God," *The Jurist* 53 (1993), 138.
[95] Ibid., 139.
[96] William J.Rademacher, *The New Practical Guide for Parish Councils* (Mystic, CT: Twenty-third Publications, 1997), 4. See also pp. 9-10 above.

1. The Church, as the new people of God, derives from the covenant of Christ's blood. Christians do not choose to make themselves the Church. God chooses his people.
2. The people chosen by God is called to be a community of life, love and truth. The unity consists of a unity of mission, witness, prayer, praise, faith, etc. That which makes the people one (one Lord, one faith, one baptism…[97]), helps to fashion and constitute various Church structures, such as diocesan and parish pastoral councils.
3. The community is called to be a community of salvation. God calls his people to be instruments of salvation for all. One of the purposes of the PPC is to discern the calls of God concerning how his people can be effective instruments of salvation.
4. The new people of God have the freedom and dignity commensurate with their baptismal status. The leadership of the PPC must respect all of the members as equal heirs to the life of grace. Likewise, councilors must not be satisfied with token or "paper" councils. Such things demean their dignity.
5. All the baptized share in the priesthood of Christ. This is not to suggest that all of the baptized are ordained, but they are indeed consecrated and share in Christ's work of offering themselves and their work for the glory of God. All of the baptized are "fellow workers in Christ Jesus" (Rom 16.3), and not merely "Father's helpers".

[97] See Eph. 4.4-6.

6. All of the baptized share in Christ's prophetic office. The PPC, consistent of Christian "prophets" must confront the secular culture's faulty value system. In other words, the PPC is not merely about itself or the parish.
7. The people of God are imbued with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who makes each person in the Church fit for various tasks and offices (cf. Eph 4). One of the functions of the PPC is to discern who in the parish has which gifts, and how they can be put to good use to build up the Church and further its mission.
8. The people of God is a communion of disciples in the Lord. Members of the PPC are first and foremost disciples of Christ, as opposed to a special interest group, a "political" or managerial organization, etc.

Rademacher concludes his analysis by commenting: "The theology of the people of God, which has just been explained, has some practical applications for the operation of parish councils. It means that the council is called to rely more on faith, prayer, and the Spirit than on its bylaws and constitution. Voting procedures may be helpful but faith in the Lord and in fellow Christians is primary. Every meeting is meant to be an experience in faith and in community...."[98]

Codification

In 1983, after many years of experimentation and development, the Church codified the institution of the PPC in its revised Code of Canon Law. The pertinent canon (#536) reads as follows:

[98] Ibid., 9.

1. If, after consulting the council of priests, the diocesan Bishop considers it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish. In this council, which is presided over by the parish priest, Christ's faithful, together with those who by virtue of their office are engaged in pastoral care in the parish, give their help in fostering pastoral action.
2. The pastoral council has only a consultative vote, and it is regulated by the norms laid down by the diocesan Bishop. [99]

The above canon leaves the establishment of the PPC to the discretion of the local bishop. Should the local bishop decide that it is opportune to mandate the existence of PPC's in his diocese, he is responsible for developing pertinent norms and directives that define and regulate the councils.[100]

The PPC and Consultation

The list of norms for the Diocese of Cleveland includes specifying the nature of the PPC as "a consultative body which makes recommendations to the Pastor."[101] Consultation respects the authority of the pastor, who presides over the PPC, while recognizing the responsibilities and gifts of the baptized adults who comprise the council. Consultation is consistent with the Code of Canon Law, which specifies its application to PPC's in canon 536. Canon 212 indicates that the people of God have a right to be heard by their pastors. (John Keating calls this a "remarkable canon".[102]) William Rademacher cites the observation of Bertram Griffin:

> Consultation in the revised Code is not a mere pro forma act. Canon 127 states that if consultation is required by law, the majority of the group to be consulted must be consulted for the validity of the administrative act, unless

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[99] *Code of Canon Law Annotated* (Montreal: Wilson and Lafleur Limitee, 1993), 304.
[100] See appendix: *List of Norms for Parish Pastoral Councils, Diocese of Cleveland.*
[101] Diocese of Cleveland, *Christ Calls us Together: Parish Pastoral Council Policy* (Diocese of Cleveland: 1990), 11.
[102] John Keating, "Consultation in the Parish," *Origins* 14 (Oct. 11, 1984), 263.

> particular law provides otherwise. If consent is required by law, it must be obtained for validity. Moreover, the administrator (bishop or pastor) should not act against the advice of the consultors, especially if they are concordant, unless he has a prevailing reason. Hence the Code clearly recommends consensus management as a decisions making style and process in the church, allowing for discretion on the part of the bishop or pastor, but recommending that a consensus be achieved and that the administrator follow the consultation of appropriate bodies.[103]

The guidelines of the diocese of Cleveland underscore the importance of the PPC's consultative role:

> As a consultative body, the recommendations of the Parish Pastoral Council bear considerable weight. The Council is not a body which makes binding decisions nor is it an advisory group which gives advice that can be readily ignored. When a Council regularly seeks to arrive at a consensus, rarely would a Pastor not accept a Council recommendation. While the Pastor is not obliged to follow the recommendations of a Parish Pastoral Council, it is understood that he would do so unless there is an extraordinary reason to do otherwise. When this is the case, he makes known the basis for his decision to those concerned....[104]

When the pastor does not approve a parish pastoral council's recommendation, and the councilors wish to pursue the matter, the Cleveland guidelines provide for an appeal process. The matter can be referred to the Regional Bishop.[105]

William Rademacher presents consultation as a function of its ecclesial context, rather than a process that derives from civil or secular models. What difference does the ecclesial context make, in the process of consultation? Rademacher lists six elements of the theology of consultation.[106]

1. The most important element in the ecclesial decision-making is faith.

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[103] Rademacher, *Practical Guide*, 48.
[104] Diocese of Cleveland, *PPC Policy*, 12.
[105] Ibid., 43.

> The community finds its identity in its faith response to the Word when it shares one bread and one cup. The identity must remain intact when the community moves from the table of the Lord to the table of the meeting to make its decisions about its mission in the world. If the community, in moving to its decision-making meeting, begins to respond only to the law or to Roberts Rules of Order, it has betrayed its very identity. In fact, decision-making itself must nourish and enliven that faith.[107]

2. Consultation takes place in the context of common discipleship. The basis for the bond of discipleship is baptism. Common discipleship constitutes one of the bases of Church unity. Outwardly, discipleship may take various forms (from the pastor to the poorest peasant), but these forms do not override the need for consultation. "The consultative process strengthens, rather than diminishes, the bonds of common discipleship. It honors the fellowship's diversity of experience, of knowledge, of gifts, of competence."[108]
3. St. Paul's image of the body can be used to understand the ecclesial context of consultation. (Cf. 1 Cor. 12.12-31.) The body (i.e., the Church) is one, and yet there are many members. The Pauline image also shapes the consultative process.

   > [I]f consultation divides the church into 'consultors' and 'consultees,' it divides the body. If consultation does not honor the usefulness of all the various parts of the body, then the church itself becomes a sign of a distorted, crippled body in which some of its parts do not function. To put it briefly, in consultation in the church, the foot is consulting the hand.[109]

4. Consultation in the Church takes place in a charismatic context, i.e., in the common possession of the Holy Spirit. The baptized have received an

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[106] Rademacher, *Practical Guide*, 41-45.
[107] Ibid., 41.
[108] Ibid., 42.

abundance of gifts from the Holy Spirit, who gives to each as he wills (cf. 1 Cor 12.11). "Since the gifts are given to 'each according to the measure of faith' (Rom. 12.3), we can't confine the gifts to a caste system, to the ordained, to the educated, to the hierarchy, to the laity, etc.... without at the same time denying the Vatican II teaching on the common possession of the Spirit."[110]

5. Consultation takes place in the context of the ongoing pilgrimage that characterizes the Church's path of penance, renewal, and discernment. "Consultation takes place in the context of repentance and change of heart. All the baptized, whether ordained or not are part of the imperfection of the church. Whether consulting or being consulted, all the baptized have as their primary duty to make an honest and careful appraisal of whatever needs to be renewed and achieved in the Catholic household itself."[111]
6. Consultation in the Church is dialogic. "The living church is constantly in conversation with its bishops, with its theologians, with its own tradition, with its mystics, with its saints, with its own people, and with the signs of the times. It is a conversation in which listening is more important than speaking. It is this listening attitude that leads to fruitful consultation in the church."[112]

Major Pastoral Concerns

Having established the consultative nature of the PPC, an obvious question is, "to which matters does consultation apply?" The area of competence

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[109] Ibid., 43.
[110] Ibid., 43-44.
[111] Ibid., 44.
[112] Ibid., 45.

for consulting a PPC is necessarily a circumscribed one. The Cleveland diocese's guidelines state: "The Pastor consults the Pastoral Council on major pastoral concerns which affect the life and mission of the parish: namely, to proclaim the Word, to build up the community, to celebrate liturgy, and to serve all God's people."[113] The guidelines make the distinction between properly pastoral concerns and matters of administration. Acts of administration concern such things as personnel matters, budgeting, scheduling, implementing parish policies, etc. Such acts of administration belong to the pastor, his staff, or to the Finance Council and not properly to the PPC.

Pastoral Planning

John Renken cautions against over-emphasizing the consultative nature of the PPC. A pastor may consult with individuals and parish groups other than the PPC. "Consultation exists throughout the Church. No group or process or individual, however, finds its specific identity in its consultative nature, but instead in its proper mission...."[114] And what, then, is the specific mission of the PPC? It is to do the work of pastoral planning.

> The [PPC] is the pastoral planning body of the parish. It ensures ongoing collaboration in developing and renewing a pastoral plan for the ministries in the life of the parish. This pastoral plan must promote the full mission of the Church: the priestly, prophetic, and royal mission of Jesus. While other groups may focus on a specific area of mission and ministry, the Parish Pastoral Council is responsible for determining how the parish can be most effective in fulfilling its total mission. The Council discerns what needs to be supported, changed, or developed to make the parish more faithful to the call of God.[115]

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[113] Diocese of Cleveland, *PPC Policy*, 12.
[114] Renken, *Pastoral Planning and Dialogue*, The Jurist, 153.
[115] Diocese of Cleveland, *PPC Policy*, 14.

Making pastoral planning a reality is the essence of employing a PPC to do what it is uniquely designed to do. It is advisable for a council to follow a planning guide designed for parish use.[116] Such a guide can assist the PPC in implementing a step by step, systematic approach to planning that includes the following items:[117]

1. developing or reviewing the parish mission statement;
2. listening to the parishioners (by means of meetings, surveys, interviews, visitations);
3. identifying key needs and concerns;
4. synthesizing parish goals and priorities into an ongoing pastoral plan;
5. recommending flexible strategies and supporting follow-up related to the parish goals and priorities;
6. evaluating progress in achieving the parish pastoral plan and related goals.

Why do parishes need the services of a PPC to assist with pastoral planning? William Rademacher sums it up well.

> "Where there is no vision, the people perish.... (Prov. 29.18)(KJV)." It's a bit of biblical wisdom parishes and their councils could well take to heart. The pilgrim church will come to a halt, or exhaust itself in aimless talk if the pilgrims don't know where they are going. If councils are going to exercise leadership in the parish, they themselves need a clear sense of direction. That means they have to get involved in pastoral planning.[118]

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[116] See bibliography.
[117] Diocese of Cleveland, *PPC Policy*, 15.
[118] Rademacher, *Practical Guide*, 159.

Conclusion

The object of this chapter was to provide a theological grounding for the Parish Pastoral Council. The methodology was to begin with the theology of the Church, or "ecclesiology", concentrating on the conciliar and post-conciliar reflections on the nature and mystery of the Church. Relying on the insights of Avery Dulles, it is clear that it can be helpful to use theological "models" to help understand the Church as a mystery of the faith.

Having examined the ecclesiological context of the PPC, the chapter next examined the parish as an institution and a possible subject of theology. After reviewing the history of the parish as an institution, leading up to its codification by the Council of Trent, the chapter presented various attempts to theologize the parish.. Ultimately, we saw that, once again, the employment of theological models is recommended. Sabbas Kilian, taking a cue from Avery Dulles's models of the Church, presents different theological models of the parish. The models he presents are generally communitarian in nature. It is noteworthy that the revised Code of Canon Law now includes the community in its definition of parish.

Next, the chapter examined the Parish Pastoral Council, from the standpoint of its genesis as a modern ecclesial structure, theological themes that have special application to the PPC, its codification in Church law, and its competency in matters of major pastoral concern and pastoral planning. This sets the stage for the next chapter which will describe the operationalization of the PPC case study at Immaculate Conception Parish in Madison, Ohio.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The final phase of this project concerns the case study itself. The case study was carried out with the cooperation of the PPC of Immaculate Conception Church in Madison, Ohio. The council consists of approximately 15 members. The meetings are normally scheduled to take place on the third Sunday of a given month. I began the research phase by soliciting the council member support and expressing my confidence in their insights. I indicated to them that they would be helping me to learn important information useful to anyone seeking to form and educate a PPC.

The format for the research was simple. We would meet, as a group, on three separate occasions (in connection with our monthly PPC meeting). The research session was either before or after the meeting. The location of the research session would be in a separate room from the room in which the PPC meeting was held, if necessary. The basis for the relocation was logistical in nature. The room for the research had to be large enough to allow for the necessary tables and chairs, chalkboard, podium, and audio-visual equipment.

Session One: The PPC and Consultation

The first session took place on Sunday, January 15, 2006, in Goebel Hall, which is located in Immaculate Conception Church's Parish Center. Half of the hall (which is the size of two classrooms) was used for the session. In place were

four cafeteria-type tables, with chairs. There was plenty of space for 13 people. The session started with the demographic survey. [1] The purpose of the survey was to help me analyze the data, according to various demographic considerations. I made sure to tell the participants to make a note of the control-number in the upper right-hand corner of each survey, instructing them to make sure to affix the same number to the pre-test and the post-test for that particular session. The same procedure was followed for sessions two and three, which took place in February and July of 2006, respectively.

Pre/Post-Test Rationale

The object of the first session was for me to learn the councilors' understanding of the PPC as a consultative body. I developed a survey or "pre-test" to research their understanding.[2] Next, I conducted an instructional session designed to enhance their understanding of the issue, e.g., what does the Church mean by consultation? Why is consultation important and necessary in the life of the Church? What are various ways in which PPC and pastor interact, which more or less approximate consultation? Following the instructional session I administered another survey, called the "post-test".[3] The post-test's design is almost identical to that of the pre-test, in order to serve as a point of comparison for the councilors' understanding of the topic before and after the instructional presentation. Each survey or test is composed of nine statements to which the councilors are asked to respond by checking one of four levels of agreement: I

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[1] See the appendix.
[2] See the appendix for *Parish Council Survey: Session 1A.*
[3] See the appendix for *Parish Council Survey: Session 1B.*

strongly agree /I agree/I disagree/I strongly disagree. Additionally, there are three "open-ended" questions on each survey. What follows is an analysis of the rationale of the statements and questions that appear on the surveys. The statement or question appears in italics. If the post-test statement or question is different, both versions will be indicated in italics, separated by a slash mark.

1. *It is necessary for a pastor to consult with his Parish Pastoral Council before making any decision.* The rationale behind this statement is to test the councilors' understanding of their participative role in the pastor's responsibility to make decisions that affect the life of the parish. The key word in the statement is *any.* A pastor makes innumerable decisions, which include such things as financial matters (for which consultation is normally provided by the Parish Finance Council), administrative decisions (which involve consultation with the parish staff), and dozens of "mundane" practical matters (including scheduling parish programs, plant maintenance, and a host of other things). The PPC helps the pastor in various issues of *major pastoral concern.* It would be impractical, unwise, and beyond the scope of the PPC for the pastor to consult with the PPC before making any and every decision.

2. *The Parish Pastoral Council is the only group in the parish which provides the Pastor with the consultation he needs.* Consultation is provided by a host of parish groups, at the pastor's request. However, there are only two official

consultative parish bodies which have their basis in Canon Law: the Parish Pastoral Council.[4] and the Parish Finance Council.[5]

3. *The best way for a Parish Pastoral Council to reach a decision is by majority vote.* Because Americans are raised with the idea that the democratic process is the fairest means for choosing leaders and making decisions on certain political issues, PPC members may assume that majority vote is the best method for reaching a decision on a pastoral matter. Many councilors may simply be unaware of any other means to help the pastor determine what is the best course of action for the parish. What are other means for a group (especially a group affiliated with the Church), besides the "democratic process" to arrive at a decision? There is *consensus* and *discernment*.[6] If the PPC is an ecclesial entity, and not a parliamentary or business group, it should be open to more spiritual means of decision-making. Besides, the Holy Spirit can speak through an individual or a minority.

4. *A parish can benefit much from a pastor consulting with his Parish Pastoral Council.* For a councilor to disagree that a parish can benefit much from a pastor consulting with his PPC, would cause me to wonder why the individual agreed to take a seat on the council.

5. I feel *well prepared to be a consultor for the pastor.* This statement is included to help me learn about the confidence level of the councilors.

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[4] See Canon #536.
[5] See Canon #537.
[6] For an explanation of consensus, see the appendix's "Perspectives on Consensus", taken from the *Christ Calls us Together*, the Cleveland Diocese's PPC policy booklet. For an explanation of

6. Why *do you feel well prepared/not well prepared to be a consultor? / Over the course of the next couple of meetings, what would by helpful to your understanding and growth as a Parish Pastoral Council member?* This is the companion question to the previous statement. It is important for me to learn why the councilors answered number five the way they did. Additionally, their honest input will allow me to learn what has helped them in their formation and what else they might need to be suitably prepared for their work on the PPC.

7. *Do you believe that there are any obstacles in the Parish Pastoral Council's consultative role? What are they? / Regarding obstacles to the Parish Pastoral Council's role as a consultative body to the pastor, what have you learned?* Here, I am interested to hear the councilors' perspective on the matter. William Rademacher lists the following theological obstacles to consultation: clericalism, failure of Christians to respond to the Lord's call for continuing conversion, failure to understand the mission of the Church and our mission as disciples, lack of understanding about ecclesial consultative bodies and their roles and functions, and ignorance of the stages of the consultative process (e.g., data collection, identifying options, and making a recommendation to the pastor).[7] The post-test seeks to elicit what the councilors have learned from my instructional presentation.

8. *In some cases a pastor does not need to consult the Parish Pastoral Council.* This statement is almost the converse of statement one of the pre/post-test

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discernment, see the appendix for the Diocese of Nashville's "Discernment", based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

[7] See Rademacher's *The New Practical Guide for Parish Councils*, pp. 52-58.

surveys. The point, again, is that the pastor does not need to consult the PPC for any and every decision that he is called on to make. Certain matters require specialists or technically trained people to provide consultation to the pastor. There are situations, also, in which the PPC is unprepared for consultation due to inexperience or lack of formation. Such a thing might be the case when a pastor consults a newly established PPC about developing a pastoral plan for the parish, only to be met with councilors who do not know what a pastoral plan is. And, unless the matter at hand is an item of major pastoral concern, or it otherwise pertains to pastoral planning, the PPC is normally not consulted.[8]

9. *In making a decision, a pastor may consult with the Parish Pastoral Council and come to the decision on his own.* A pastor should take the council's recommendations seriously. In fact, the Diocese of Cleveland suggests that only rarely should a pastor do something other than what the PPC advises. If there is a dispute about a pastor making a decision at variance with the council's recommendation, the diocese even provides for an appeal process which involves the regional/auxiliary bishop.[9] The PPC, however, is not supposed to function as a board of trustees to which the pastor is accountable. Canon #536 makes this clear when it states, "The pastoral council possesses a *consultative vote only*..." (emphasis added).

10. *Sometimes it is necessary for a pastor to have the consensus of the Parish Pastoral Council before taking a certain course of action.* I wanted to test the

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[8] See Mark Fisher's "When Should a Pastor not Consult the Council?" in *Today's Parish*, March of 1999.

[9] See appendix: *Appeal Process when a Council Recommendation is not Approved.*

councilors' knowledge on mandatory consultation. Canon law requires that the bishop consult with his official priest-consultors, priests' council or Diocesan Pastoral Council before making certain decisions. Otherwise the decisions are invalid.[10] Canon law says nothing specifically about such mandatory consultation at the parish level, regarding the PPC. However, because most of the pertinent PPC legislation is generated by the local diocese, and not by canon law, a bishop can require PPC consultation in certain instances.[11] For example, a pastor can be directed to consult with both the PPC and the Parish Finance Council, regarding construction projects that exceed a certain minimum cost, as is the case in the Diocese of Cleveland.

11. *What does "consultation" mean to you? / What aspects of Fr. Donnelly's presentation gave you new insights into consultation?* I am interested in hearing from the councilors' answers to these questions. I am also seeking to learn what changes in their thinking have resulted from hearing my presentation on the subject.

12. *The process of consultation must reflect our love for the Church, her mission, and our common discipleship.* The statement will give me an opportunity to expound on the ecclesial context of the PPC.

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[10] See Radmacker's *The New Practical Guide for Parish Councils*, pp. 46-50.

Summary of Instructions on the PPC and Consultation

The Catholic Church's Code of Canon Law indicates that the PPC is a consultative body, mandated at the discretion of the local bishop.[12] The canon cited specifies that the bishop himself must seek consultation from his priest-consultors, as to whether or not each parish in his diocese should be required to have a PPC. What precisely is consultation? The dictionary provides several definitions. It is apposite for us to investigate consultation in the context of the mystery of the Church. Ecclesial consultation respects the Church as a body with many members having various functions, while working together in a common mission. Consultation is both familial and dialogic. It is a process of shared decision-making whereby appointed leaders and representatives reach consensus through prayerful discernment, discussion, respect and trust. Consultation in the Catholic Church differs from both opinion-giving and "congregationalism". That is, the pastor needs to listen to his consultors without abdicating his responsibility to make the decisions he needs to make. The purpose of consultation is to allow the pastor to benefit from the shared wisdom of the people in the decisions for which he is ultimately responsible.

History shows us that consultation has been an integral part of the Church's life even from apostolic times. The Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) was a consultative session attended by many of the Church leaders of the day (including St. Paul) to discuss whether pagan converts to Christianity should be required to

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[11] Canon #536, section 2 indicates: "The pastoral council… is governed by norms determined by the diocesan bishop."
[12] Canon #536

become Jews before becoming Christians. The consultative session discerned that requiring such a thing was not of the Holy Spirit. The discernment took place in a communal context, rather than it being a unilateral decision (e.g., St. Paul's). Since that time the Church has had 21 ecumenical councils in which bishops have listened to each other, to various experts and to representatives of other religious bodies (as in the Second Vatican Council). Consultation continues to play an important part in the Church's life. Matters for consultation include such things as the selection of bishops. And popes have even consulted bishops and theologians about promulgating certain tenets of the faith as dogmas (e.g., the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary). As the mystery of the Church is present on the parish level, as a body of believers with various gifts and ministries, it is only right and just that the consultative process is allowed to operate there.

There are several methods of consultation. One is to seek a consensus among the members of the group. Another is a more formalized exercise in prayerful discernment. The consultative process is sometimes difficult. There can be obstacles. One such obstacle is ignorance of the process itself. The PPC must collect data on a given issue, identify various options and only after sufficient reflection make a recommendation to the pastor. There are times when consultation of the PPC is neither required nor advised (e.g., in a technical matter that requires experts schooled in the field). A pastor consults the PPC in matters of major pastoral concern. Other concerns (e.g., hiring and firing, finances, administration) are the province of other consultative groups or individuals (e.g.,

the Parish Finance Council or the parish staff). As it is, the pastor has many sources of consultation at his disposal (e.g., the people he greets in church on Sunday, home-visits, fellow-pastors). The parish pastoral council's consultative role, which is specific to it, involves such things as pastoral planning, parish goal-setting, improving pastoral services/ministries, and evaluating pastoral effectiveness.

Session Two: The Purpose and Nature of the PPC

Pre/Post-Test Rationale

As explained above,[13] the italicized items are sentences or questions that appear on the surveys completed by members of the Immaculate Conception PPC. The pre-test was completed before my presentation on the Nature and Purpose of the PPC. The post-test was completed subsequent to the presentation. The surveys are identical, except for the open-ended question which appears as number ten below. Both the pre and post-test version of number ten appear side by side, separated by a slash mark.[14]

1. *The Parish Pastoral Council allows the parish priest (the pastor) to surrender or diminish his role as the shepherd of the flock.* The statement attempts to ascertain the councilors' understanding that collaboration between pastor and council does not take away or diminish the role of the pastor. The Code of Canon

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[13] See page 56.

[14] The surveys can be viewed in the appendix, as *Parish Pastoral Council Survey 2A* and *Parish Pastoral Council Survey 2B*.

Law (e.g., canons 519, 528-530) is quite explicit about the many aspects of the pastor's responsibilities.[15] Non-agreement, of course, is the preferred response.

2. *It is important for Parish Pastoral Council members to have a basic knowledge of the responsibilities of the pastor.* I would suspect that most of the councilors who are surveyed will express basic agreement with this statement. The statement prepares the councilors to consider what a pastor's responsibilities are. The instructional session[16] will address the matter.[17]

3. *Why is it important/unimportant for Parish Pastoral Council members to have a basic knowledge of the responsibilities of the pastor?* The open-ended question is the same on both the pre and post-tests. Knowledge of the pastor's responsibilities is certainly pertinent to the PPC's function, which includes pastoral planning. Pastoral planning will be the topic of session three.

4. The pastor presides over the Parish Pastoral Council. There is a certain ambiguity here. "To preside" can mean to oversee or be in charge. It can also be used of the PPC officer who runs the meeting. The Cleveland diocesan policy prefers the former concept.[18] At the same time, the policy cited makes a provision for a member of the PPC's executive board to chair the meetings. I am interested to see how the PPC members perceive this matter.

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[15] See the appendix for the text of these canons.
[16] See pp. 69-72 below.
[17] See the handout in the appendix entitled: "Canon Law, the Pastor, Pastoral Planning and Parish Councils", which reviews the pastoral responsibilities of the parish priest, as indicated by the Code of Canon Law.
[18] Statement three, above, is a direct citation of norm number four of the Cleveland policy. See *List of Norms for Parish Pastoral Councils* in the appendix.

5. *The parish Pastoral Staff and the Parish Pastoral Council are simply two different names for the same thing.* The statement seeks to learn the councilors' understanding of the role of the Pastoral Staff, and how it is distinguished from that of the PPC. The former is largely concerned with acts of administration and consists largely of clerics and paid staff members (full and part time). Some of the staffers may occupy seats on the PPC. Lest the PPC be dominated by Pastoral Staff members, the Cleveland policy mandates that they can comprise no more than one third of the membership of the council.[19]

6. *The pastor is both policy-maker and administrator of the parish. The Parish Pastoral Council assists him in both areas.* Again, the attempt here is to ascertain the councilors' ability to make distinctions between pastoral concerns and acts of administration. The PPC assists the pastor in his role as policy-maker. It is the Pastoral Staff that assists him in his role as administrator.

7. *The purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council is to promote the spiritual growth of the parish via spiritual formation, pastoral planning, pastoral policy-development, and communication.* This declaration is a summary of the material presented under norm five of the Cleveland policy.[20] How familiar are the councilors with the explanation given in the policy booklet? I will find out in the results on the pre-test.

8. *The members of the Parish Pastoral Council should reflect the interests and needs of the parish community.* The statement, as written, is a citation of the

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[19] See p. 18 of *Christ Calls us Together: Parish Pastoral Council Policy*, Diocese of Cleveland, Nov. 25, 1990.

[20] See Cleveland policy, pp. 14-16.

Cleveland policy's norm six.[21] The "representational" nature of the PPC, in the Cleveland policy, includes two aspects: structure and attitude. The PPC's composition should reflect a cross-section of the parish (*structure*). At the same time, councilors should have a representational attitude, considering the good of the whole parish and not merely a single point of view.

9. *Membership in the Parish Pastoral Council is open to registered members of the parish who are in full communion with the Church.* The statement here is another citation from the Cleveland policy.[22] PPC bylaws should reiterate the requirement and, perhaps, specify what is meant by being in "full communion" with the Church. One basic idea is that a member must be a practicing Catholic and a parishioner. Also, although the Cleveland policy does not elaborate on this point, membership in the PPC is not a "right" under Church law, in that it is not specified in the Code of Canon Law's "Bill of Rights".[23]

10. *What, in your opinion, are some qualities that prospective members of the Parish Pastoral Council should possess? / What qualities do you bring to the Parish Pastoral Council?* I cover various qualities in the instructional part of the session. I am interested in what the councilors have to say on the matter. In the post-test, my aim is for the councilors to apply the question to themselves.

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[21] See appendix for the Diocese of Cleveland's *List of Norms for Parish Pastoral Councils.*
[22] Cleveland *PPC Policy*, p. 16.
[23] See Laurence J. Spiteri's *The Code in the Hands of the Laity*, pp. 5f. Spiteri writes: "Americans are very familiar with the Bill of Rights, just as the British are familiar with the Magna Carta. These are legal documents which guarantee certain rights to the citizens of each country. Canons 208-223 of the 1983 Code contain a similar guarantee for all the members of the Catholic Church."

11. *There are several ways to select new members of the Parish Pastoral Council.* The Cleveland policy speaks of several methods.[24] The methods include discernment, elections, and appointment. Most councilors, in my experience, are familiar only with elections and ex-officio appointments (as would apply to certain members of the Pastoral Staff). The Cleveland policy specifies only that the method be appropriate and involve the participation of the parish. [25]

12. *All members of the Parish Pastoral Council are required to have limited terms.* Norm 8 of the Cleveland policy exempts ex-officio members from the requirement of limited terms.[26] This means, in theory, that two thirds of the membership is "rotational".

13. *It is the responsibility of the PPC to implement the policies that it recommends to the pastor.* It is not the responsibility of the PPC to implement the policies that it recommends. This is why the PPC "works with existing parish groups and forms new groups as needed to promote the spiritual growth of the parish and foster the mission of the Church."[27]

Summary of Instructions on the Nature and Purpose of the PPC

The Catholic Church's Code of Canon Law permits the establishment of Parish Pastoral Councils at the discretion of the local bishop.[28] Having established their validity, the code says little more about the PPC. The main source for specifics on the nature and purpose of the PPC is the policy statement

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[24] See Norm 7 of the policy in the appendix.
[25] Cleveland *PPC Policy*, p. 18.
[26] See the Cleveland *PPC Policy*, p. 20.
[27] Ibid., p. 23.
[28] See Canon #536.

developed by each bishop for his respective diocese. Session II seeks to present an overview of the PPC, based on the legislation found in the policy booklet of the Diocese of Cleveland.[29]

The Diocese of Cleveland's policy lists ten norms for Parish Pastoral Councils, which include the various elements pertinent to understanding the nature and purpose of the council. After directing that each parish in the diocese is to establish a PPC (Norm 1), Norms 2-4 concern the relationships of the council to the pastor. Clearly, the relationship is one of collaboration.

Although the PPC neither takes the place of the pastor nor subsumes his responsibilities, the council is a pastoral body. Therefore, it behooves the councilors to have a firm grasp on what constitutes specifically pastoral concerns. The Cleveland policy enumerates the pastoral responsibilities of the parish priest as teacher, governor, and sanctifier, as indicated in canons 528 and 529. Without a clear concept of what are, properly speaking, *pastoral* concerns (Norm 4), the PPC will be compromised in its identity and function. It will not be effective in the service that it is supposed to render to the parish, namely, "to promote the spiritual growth of the parish community and to plan ways for the parish to carry out the mission of the Church" (Norm 5).

The Cleveland policy further clarifies the distinction of the PPC by comparing its unique role to that of the Parish Staff and Parish Finance Council. Whereas a PPC (in the Diocese of Cleveland) does not normally deal with

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[29] The booklet is entitled: *Christ Calls us Together*. It was published by the Diocese of Cleveland on Nov. 25, 1990. In the footnotes to this paper, the booklet will be referred to as the *Cleveland PPC Policy*.

temporal concerns (as does the Parish Finance Council), it is apposite to underline the distinction between areas of major pastoral concern and the day-to-day requirements of applying pastoral policies, responding to immediate demands of parish life, and the making of many short-term administrative decisions. It is the pastor and his staff who deal with the latter. Relative to the PPC, the pastor's role is that of *policy-maker*. Relative to the Parish Staff, the pastor's role is that of *administrator*.[30]

The PPC, the Parish Staff, and the various commissions and committees each contribute to the process of developing, implementing, and evaluating pastoral policy initiatives. The PPC, commissions and Parish Staff work together, with input from parishioners, to gather the data required to assess parish needs. The commissions and Parish Staff, with input from the PPC, determine several alternatives or courses of action to respond to those needs. It is the PPC that recommends and, later, evaluates the policy that was developed. The implementation of the policy is the function of the pastor, his staff, and parish committees. Seen in this way, it is clear that the PPC has a unique role to play, but does not stand alone. Norm 10 of the Cleveland policy states: "The PPC works with existing parish groups and forms new groups as needed to promote the spiritual growth of the parish and foster the mission of the Church."

Finally, the Cleveland Diocese's PPC policy includes four norms (Norms 6-9) which pertain to PPC membership. The members should represent the interests

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[30] See appendix for the Cleveland policy's *The Pastoral Council, the Parish Staff/Team, and the Finance Council,* and *Distinction Between Policy and Administration*. These pages can readily be used as handouts for the councilors.

and pastoral needs of the parish community (Norm 6). Membership in the PPC is to be determined in "an appropriate manner which allows for the participation of the parish community" (Norm 8). And although some members of the PPC are members ex-officio, at least two thirds of the membership should have limited terms (Norm 8). Also, there is to be a board of officers elected by PPC members (Norm 9).

Session Three: Pastoral Planning

Pre/Post-Test Rationale

The italicized items, below, are sentences or questions that appear on the surveys completed by members of the Immaculate Conception PPC.[31] Councilors completed the pre-test prior to my presentation on pastoral planning. Following the presentation, the councilors completed the post-test. Each of the research instruments used for session three consists of nine statements which seek relative degrees of agreement/disagreement from the councilors. Additionally, there are three open-ended questions, which vary between the pre-test and the post-test. In numbers 11 and 13, below, I note both the pre and post-test version side by side, separated by a slash mark.

1. *Parish pastoral planning enables the Church to cope with the changing needs of our society and emerging needs of people.* This statement is a direct citation from William Harms's "parish-project" book on the subject of pastoral

[31] See the appendix for *Parish Council Surveys* 3A and 3B

planning.[32] The statement seeks to uncover the councilors' understanding of why pastoral planning is necessary, given the rate of social and cultural change, and their effect on individuals and parishes. The mission of the Church, in which the parish takes part, must be conducted in a world that is in a state of flux. We must deal with present realities, and, at the same time, be prepared for future contingencies.

2. *Parish planning is the same thing as corporate and civic planning.* I would assume that the councilors would disagree with the statement as it is written. The missing element in corporate and civic planning is the gospel and the mission that is specific to the Church to build up the kingdom of God. As the Diocese of Nashville puts it: "[Parish pastoral planning] incorporates theological reflection into the planning process, bringing the light of the Gospel and our tradition of faith to the pastoral situation at hand."[33]

3. *Churches without plans for growth invariably stagnate.* I derived this statement from Aubrey Malphurs, who made the comment with church leaders in mind. "Gary McIntosh of the American Society for Church Growth estimates that only 20 percent of American's 367,000 congregations actively pursue strategic planning."[34] If pastors are slow to embrace pastoral planning, what attitudes do the people of the congregation have? I am curious as to the councilors' appreciation of the importance of planning.

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[32] William Harms, *Who are we and where are we Going? A Guide to Parish Planning* (Sadlier: New York, 1981), 17.
[33] *Parish Pastoral Council Handbook* (Diocese of Nashville, Jan. 2004), 6.
[34] Aubrey Malphurs, *Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999), 9.

4. *Pastoral planning should involve the pastor, the Parish Pastoral Council, and the whole parish.* The PPC does not plan *for* the parish, as if it were an oligarchy imposing its view on the rest of the congregation. It must plan *with* the parish. It is necessary to elicit the cooperation of the parish in assessing needs. Also, the PPC does not operate independently of the pastor. Without his support and guidance, planning will be hampered, if it takes place at all. I believe that the councilors will agree to the statement, although some of them might not understand the role of the parish in the planning process.

5. *The first step in the planning process is the formation of a parish mission statement.* Immaculate Conception parish no longer has an up to date mission statement. I assume that most people, who have experience in the corporate or civic world, will know what a mission statement is.

6. *Planning for the future is something like shooting in the dark because it is difficult to predict what the parish will need in years to come. T*the process of pastoral planning involves formulating working hypotheses which are based on relevant data, facts and trends. William Harms states it well. "An assumption is not an accurate forecast, but neither is it mere conjecture or opinion."[35]

7. *The idea of setting goals in the parish is to make concrete what we would like to see happen in the next ten to fifteen years.* The preferred response here is one of disagreement. All of my research indicates that pastoral plans must be limited to the immediate future (three to five years). William Harms comments: "The time frame of three years for a goal is based on my experience of the rate of

change in our society. There are planning systems that see a Goal [sic] with a realization time of five to ten years. It is my belief however, that those time frames are too distant for Parish Planning."[36]

8. *The more goals a parish sets for itself, the more vibrant the parish will be.* It is necessary to be as practical as possible when setting goals. William Harms states: "It is my belief that every Goal [sic] developed by you is good. But not every Goal can be started at this moment. It is therefore necessary to make specific choices. Your resources are limited and should not be stretched beyond endurance."[37]

9. *Parish pastoral planning necessarily involves program development and evaluation.* The preferred response, here, is agreement. Selected goals have to be implemented. Often, this requires program development. Evaluation is the final phase of the pastoral planning cycle.[38]

10. *What are some obstacles to parish pastoral planning? /. How can we, as a parish, overcome any obstacle to parish pastoral planning?* One of the first things necessary to insure that planning can take place is commitment to the process, on the part of pastor, PPC, parish, and the various organizations and ministries that are involved in the life of the parish. Other obstacles could be failures to understand the nature and purpose of the PPC, with respect to planning, failure to understand the mission of the Church as it is localized in the parish, failure to be open to the Holy Spirit, in the process of discernment, lack of

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[35] Harms, *A Guide to Parish Planning*, 50.
[36] Ibid., 56.
[37] Ibid., 59.

cooperation among council members, etc. The point is that many things can derail the process of planning. Hence, we can see the importance of the second version of the question, which seeks to uncover obstacles that might be present in a particular parish, namely, Immaculate Conception.

11. *In a brief statement, what do you believe is the mission of our parish? / What are some of the things that you have learned from Fr. Donnelly's several presentations on the Parish Pastoral Council? (His topics were: consultation, the nature and mission of the Parish Pastoral council, and pastoral planning.)* The various sources that I consulted about pastoral planning are unanimous in specifying that a parish must draw up a mission statement, in order to do effective pastoral planning. In fact, the drawing up of a *contemporary* mission statement is the second step or phase in the planning process, immediately after commitment to planning.[39] The second variation of question eleven is for my own information.

12. *What are some ways for assessing the needs of our parish? / What other issues, concerning Parish Pastoral Councils, would you like to see covered in the future?* The first version of question twelve pertains to methods for acquiring and analyzing pertinent data. I will address these areas in the section below on phases three and four of the planning process: *data* and *assumptions and analysis*.

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[38] See appendix handout, *What is Planning*?

[39] See in appendix *What is Planning?* The diagram is taken found in the *Parish Pastoral Council Handbook* of the Diocese of Nashville. It is also found in William Harms's *A Guide to Parish Planning*. The adjective *contemporary* is indicative of the need for periodic revisions of the mission statement. It is not so much that the mission of the Church changes (the gospel does not change from age to age), but, rather, the way that the parish addresses the needs of contemporary society.

Summary of Instructions on Pastoral Planning

What is pastoral planning? "Pastoral planning is structured involvement of believing persons in developing and maintaining the connection between what they believe and what they do in determining their future as Church. It enables the Church to cope with the changing situations in our society and with the emerging needs of people."[40] And yet, "[p]arish pastoral planning is distinguished from corporate and civic planning. It incorporates theological reflection into the planning process, bringing the light of the Gospel and our tradition of faith to the pastoral situation at hand."[41]

Why should a parish *plan*? There are several reasons. Modern society is changing at a rapid rate. It is important not only for a parish to meet present day challenges, but also to anticipate the future. A parish that does not strive to be proactive, relying, instead on old assumptions and functions, will lose its vitality. Parish planning also helps parishes to discover their own resources and supports which are necessary to carry out every aspect of the mission.[42]

What are the principles of parish planning? Pastoral planning is a participative process, which involves the pastor, the PPC, parish organizations and ministries, and the whole parish. Planning reinforces the common purpose of the parish and that the people of the parish should be working together to help develop and realize the goals that are to be implemented. The pastor's involvement is a sine qua non. He facilitates, coordinates, and stimulates the gifts

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[40] Harms, *Guide to Parish Planning*, 17.
[41] Diocese of Nashville Handbook, 6.
[42] See Harms, *Guide to Parish Planning*, 18.

of the parish membership. The PPC keeps the planning process in motion, and keeps the parish informed of the progress.[43]

What are the phases or steps in the planning process? There are nine of them:[44]

1. Commitment to planning
2. Development of mission statement
3. Data gathering
4. Interpretation of data: assumptions and analysis
5. Goal setting
6. Specification of objectives
7. Program development
8. Implementation
9. Evaluation

Assuming that there is the requisite commitment to planning, on the part of the pastor, the PPC, the parish staff, the heads of various parish organizations, and the parishioners, the process begins with the formation of *a parish mission statement.* The mission of a parish is *"[t]hat thrust which gives direction and meaning to all the activities of the parish.* It is a statement of purpose that answers the question, 'why do I belong?' It must be clearly stated and accepted by everyone in the parish, as well as by those persons, agencies or offices that

[43] Ibid., 20.

assist the parish in the fulfillment of its mission in the Church."[45] The statement should be formed after examining the main activities and programs of the parish and reflecting on the commonly held beliefs and convictions that motivate a parish to initiate and support these activities. The statement itself should be brief, spiritual, inspiring and comprehensive.[46]

The data gathering phase assures that planning will not be based on conjecture or mere opinion, but on adequate information about the parish. It is important to establish a parish profile, which is a compilation of statistics on pertinent data: the number of families in the parish, the age distribution of parishioners, sacramental statistics and so forth. Together with demographic data about the local community and information about present parish programs and activities, the PPC can answer the question, "who are we?"[47]

The data must be interpreted in light of trends in parish growth and development. To do this, the PPC examines parish programs for their effectiveness and vitality, parish resources, the available knowledge and skills needed to direct parish activities, and asking pertinent questions as to what the parish needs. What is missing? What is right/wrong with the parish/program? Council members are not only to consult their own experience, or the experience of other parishioners, but they are to discern these matters before God. The latter, of course, requires listening and prayer.[48]

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[44] See also Appendix, *What is Planning?*
[45] Harms, *Guide to Parish Planning*, 25.
[46] Ibid., 28.
[47] See Harms, *Guide to Parish Planning*,, 38ff.
[48] See Harrms, *Guide to Parish Planning*, 46f.

Having formulated a trends analysis, it is necessary to ask why things are the way they are. Here, the PPC is looking for *conditioning factors*. If the question at hand is "why is the Holy Name Society losing members?", perhaps, the conditioning factors would be uncovered by asking appropriate questions. Questions might include: Is the organization of interest to men in the parish? Does the membership understand the purpose of the organization? Is there a service component to the organization?[49]

After developing an understanding of parish trends and conditioning factors the PPC can make certain assumptions. Assumptions are hypotheses based on fact. They can cover many areas, e.g., sociological, economic, pastoral, educational, etc. One example of the use of trend analysis, analysis of conditioning factors, and assumptions is seen in the following example. The trend might be the increasing need for Spanish services. The conditioning factor is the growing number of Hispanics in the parish. The operating assumption, based on demographic and societal trends is that there will be an increase in Hispanic parishioners over the next five years.[50]

After formulating various such assumptions, the PPC can set certain goals for the parish to achieve in a three to five year period. "A goal consists of a set of results one hopes to achieve. In other words... what you want to see happen. A goal differs from a mission statement in that it has a terminal point of three years, and can be recognized when it has been achieved."[51] Many possible goals can be

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[49] Ibid., 49.
[50] Ibid. 50.
[51] Ibid., 55.

formulated. However, for the sake of effective planning, the PPC must be discriminating as to which goals it selects. Selection should consider which goals will move the parish in the direction toward becoming the kind of Church the Lord wants. Pertinent questions in the selection process include the following. What changes (in the parish) are needed? How can we bring them about? Which areas should we change first?[52]

To make the goals manageable, it is necessary to formulate objectives, which are the steps necessary to achieve the goals. "An objective is a one-year detailed step toward the goal."[53] The formulation of objectives will lead to the necessary program development. Which parish ministry or organization will be tasked with realizing a particular objective? Perhaps, a new organization/ministry has to be established (e.g., a parish Welcoming Committee). The implementation of objectives is at the heart of the parish action plan. A PPC needs to develop an annual calendar, accordingly.. Finally, the PPC is charged with evaluating the plans that it has developed. Were the goals and objectives realized? Could things have been accomplished differently? Was the program-development sufficient to implement the goals/objectives?

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[52] Ibid., 59f.
[53] Ibid., 61.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the data collected from the surveys. As discussed in chapter three above, I administered three sets of evaluative instruments to the Parish Pastoral Council. Each set consists of a demographic survey, a "pre-test" and a "post-test".[1] The object of the demographic survey was to collect pertinent data about the survey respondents. The sought for data includes such things as age, sex, marital status, educational background, etc. These items will be discussed below. The pre-test and post-test results will also be analyzed below, using tables to present the data, when appropriate. I will then analyze the data and discuss the findings, along with the expected and unexpected outcomes.

Demographic Data

Table 1 Gender and Number of Survey Respondents

Number of Respondents	Session I	Session II	Session III
Male	8	8	5
Female	5	3	3

[1] See appendix for three sets of Demographic Information, Pre-Tests and Post-Tests.

Table 1 indicates several things. The surveys were administered over the course of three sessions. Each session has its own demographic characteristics. The number of participants varies with each session, from a high of 13 to a low figure of eight. Some participants attended only one or two sessions. During the period of conducting the sessions with the PPC, there were absentees, as well as some changes in membership. Although new members are elected to start in the fall, and I conducted the sessions beginning in January of 2006, several new people came onto the council by virtue of appointment. The newly appointed members replaced outgoing commission heads, thus changing the demographic slightly.

Table 2 Age of Respondents

	Session I	Session II	Session III
Number of Respondents	13	11	8
25 to 30	1	1	2
31 to 40	5	5	3
41 to 50	3	2	2
51 to 60	2	0	0
61 to 70	1	2	0
Over 70	1	1	0
Missing value	0	0	1

Table 2 indicates that most of the survey respondents are under 50 years of age. In fact, at least half of them, in each session, are under 40, with the youngest being 29. The age-profile of the PPC does not necessarily reflect the make-up of the parish. One can see why it is important for the PPC to survey the parish, from time to time, with respect to making needs assessments. A PPC's representation

of the parish need not be a "demographic" one, but one in which the members are open to the requirements of the parish and surrounding community.

In Table 3 below, the respondents' marital status is indicated. It is worth noting that, with one exception, everyone who attended the three sessions is married. One person in the first session is divorced. Given today's high rate of divorce, even among Catholics, this is rather surprising. The fact that there are no single people can be explained, I believe, by the ages of the respondents. The youngest is 29 and the majority of them are in their 30's and 40's. I included the

Table 3 Marital Status of Respondents

	Session I	Session II	Session III
Number of respondents	13	11	8
Married	12	11	8
Divorced	1	0	0
Widowed	0	0	0

Table 4 Educational Background of Survey Respondents

	Session I	Session II	Session III
Number of respondents	13	11	8
High school graduate	13	11	8
College courses	2	4	4
College graduate	6	7	0
Graduate studies	0	3	0

"widowed" category on the questionnaires in order to draw a comparison with the parish as a whole. Immaculate Conception Church has approximately 36

funeral services each year. Most of the people buried are spouses. Widowers/widows have been on the PPC in the past.

The first thing to note about the educational background of the PPC members (see Table 4 above) is that everyone graduated from high school. Almost half of the respondents in the first session graduated from college. In the second session the educational level was even greater, with 63% of the respondents (seven out of 11) having graduated from college. The PPC members who attended the second session were the most educated of the three groupings .

Table 5 Length of Time as a Catholic

Length of time as Catholic	Session I	Session II	Session III
1 to 5 years	2	2	3
6 to 10 years	1	1	2
11 to 20 years	3	3	2
21 to 30 years	1	1	0
31 to 40 years	3	2	1
Over 40 years	3	2	0

Table 5 indicates that almost half (46%) of the respondents in the first session have been Catholics for 20 years or fewer. In the second and third sessions, the statistic is 54% and 87%, respectively. The council members are relatively young (as Table 2 indicates).

Table 6 (below) provides another look at the relative newness of the PPC members' Catholic affiliation. The table indicates that the 13 respondents in the first session are almost evenly divided between receiving their religious education by way of CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) classes or (as it would be called in more recent years), Parish School of Religion classes, and RCIA or

convert classes. CCD/PSR classes are usually weekly sessions offered to Catholic children who

Table 6 Respondents' Formal Education in the Catholic Faith[2]

Source of religious education	Session I	Session II	Session III
Catholic grade school	2	0	0
CCD or PSR	7	3	1
RCIA or convert classes	6	7	7
A Combination of the above	0	1	0

attend public day schools. The other six respondents of the session came into the Church as adults, through "convert classes" or through RCIA (the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults). Two of the respondents attended some Catholic schooling. No one attended Catholic day school throughout grades one to eight. One of the reasons for this is that Immaculate Conception does not have a parochial grade school. It is noteworthy that a decisive majority in the second and third sessions consist of people who came into the Catholic Church as adults: seven out of 11 (63%) in the second session and seven out of eight (87%) in the third session.

The Survey Responses

The following tables seek to compare the PPC's pre-test and post-test responses for each of the three sessions.[3] In the far left column is the statement that appears on both the pre and post-test. The second column indicates the "mean", which is the average response given by each participant in the survey.

[2] In session I, 13 respondents took the survey. Of the thirteen, two matriculated at a Catholic school for some of their formal religious education. Otherwise, they attended CCD or PSR classes.

[3] See appendix for each session's *Pre-Test* and *Post-Test*.

based on four points for the more strongly preferred response (e.g., strongly agree) three points for the next preferred response (e.g., agree), two points for the non-preferred response (e.g., disagree), and one point for the more strongly non-preferred response (e.g., strongly disagree). A mean of four would indicate that everyone responded to a given statement in the more preferred way. A mean of three would still indicate a consensus of preference. Anything approaching two or one would show that the respondents did not grasp the concept expressed in the statement or were otherwise uninformed as to the issue at hand. I note the change in the mean, between the pre and post-test. In some cases there is not much of a change. Sometimes the change is striking. And, of course, the change should be an increase (reflecting more understanding). Sometimes the change is a decrease. Finally, in the third column, I note the percentage of respondents who answered a given statement in the preferred way. In addition to the *quantitative data*, indicated in the tables below, I also include *qualitative* input, which consists of certain counselors' responses to open-ended questions to which I make reference in the text.

Session I: The PPC and Consultation

One of the open-ended questions of the pre-test for this session was: "What does consultation mean to you?" [4] I would bring out various aspects of consultation during the instructional phase of the session. The pre-test question was an attempt to examine the councilors' understanding of the concept before I gave them any instructions about it. I was pleasantly surprised. A middle-aged

[4] See appendix for Session I: *Consultation: Pre-Test and Post-Test Responses to Open-Ended Questions.*

woman who does social work, described consultation as "[an] exchange of information [in order] to get a better understanding of a topic". A foreman and a secretary, each in his forties, included the purpose for consultation. The secretary described consultation as "The ability to talk something out and hear other points of view so that you don't see only one side of something before making a decision". The foreman likewise stated that consultation means "get[ting] together and talk[ing] through situations using experience and knowledge to come to a good decision". One of the deacons stated succinctly that consultation is "dialogue between members and pastor". Consultation is indeed dialogic by nature. And finally, a 53 year-old legal staffer, and life-long Catholic distinguished consultation, in its ecclesial context, from consultation used in a

Table 7-A The PPC and Consultation: Survey Responses

Survey Statement	Mean	Percentage of Preferred Response
1. It is necessary for the pastor to consult with the PPC before making any decision.	Pre-Test: 2.5 Post-Test: 2.9	Pre-Test: 53.9 Post-Test: 76.9
	Change: +0.4	Change: +23.0
2. The PPC is the only group in the parish which provides the pastor with the consultation he needs.	Pre-Test: 3.0 Post-Test 3.2	Pre-Test: 84.6 Post-Test: 92.3
	Change: +0.20	Change: +7.7
3. The best way for a PPC to reach a decision is by majority vote.	Pre-Test: 1.8 Post-Test: 2.5	Pre-Test: 7.7 Post-Test: 61.5
	Change: +0.7	Change: +53.8
4. A parish can benefit much from a pastor consulting with his PPC.	Pre-Test: 3.6 Post-Test: 3.5	Pre-Test: 100 Post-Test: 100
	Change: -0.1	Change: 0.0

secular context. "[Consultation] means listening to the views and concerns of the council members and considering their views when making decisions. This is different from the board of directors in a business because of the pastoral and canonical nature of the decision making." He anticipated one of the points that I would make in the instructional presentation.

Looking at Table 7-A, above, as I had suggested in chapter three, "it would be impractical, unwise and beyond the scope of the PPC for the pastor to consult with [it] before making any and every decision".[5] I hypothesized that a good number of councilors would respond to statement number one without noticing the key word "any". As it turned out, almost half of the survey-takers responded in the non-preferred way on the pre-test. In the post-test, three quarters of them responded in the preferred way.

I must admit that I was pleasantly surprised by the results of the pre-test concerning statement two. The strong mean of 3.00 indicates solid disagreement. Apparently, the PPC was well aware of the pastor's access to many individuals and groups within the parish who can provide consultation.

Statement three's claim that majority vote is the best way for the PPC to reach a decision, was met with almost unanimous agreement. I hypothesized that this would happen. Because of our American political culture, I believed that statement number three on the pre-test would be agreeable to most of the councilors. [In fact, there was only one person who disagreed.] My hope was that after the instructional session, the councilors would be wiser. Disagreement (the preferred response) jumps from one out of thirteen on the pre-test, to eight

out of thirteen on the post-test. In the instructional phase of the session, I spoke of other means of coming to a decision, such as discernment and consensus (neither of which involves voting, strictly speaking).

Table 7-B The PPC and Consultation: Survey Responses

Survey Statement	Mean	Preferred Response by Respondents
5. I feel well prepared to be a consultor for the pastor.	Pre-Test: 2.9 Post-Test: 2.9	Pre-Test: 76.9% Post-Test: 84.6%
	Change:0.0	Change: +9.7%
8. In some cases, a pastor does not need to consult with the PPC.	Pre-Test: 3.4 Post-Test: 3.3	Pre-Test: 92.4% Post-Test: 100%
	Change: -0.1	Change: +7.6%
9. ...[A] pastor may consult with the PPC and come to a decision on his own.	Pre-Test: 3.5 Post-Test: 3.2	Pre-Test: 92.3% Post-Test: 84.7%
	Change: -0.3	Change: -7.6%
10. Sometimes it is necessary for a pastor to have the consensus of the PPC before taking a certain course of action.	Pre-Test: 3.2 Post-Test: 3.3	Pre-Test: 92.3% Post-Test: 100%
	Change: +0.1	Change: +8.7%
12. The process of consultation must reflect our love for the Church, her mission, and our common discipleship	Pre-Test: 3.9 Post-Test: 3.9	Pre-Test: 92.3% Post-Test: 100%
	Change: 0.0	Change: +8.7%

[5] See page 58 above.

Statement number four was a "give-away". Everyone on the council reckoned correctly that the parish can benefit much from a pastor who consults with his PPC. There was unanimous agreement on the pre and post-tests, although, oddly, the mean declined slightly in the post-test.

Taking a look at Table 7-B, I included statement number five to gain insight into the survey respondents' confidence level in their role as consultors. In the pre-test, only two of thirteen respondents expressed a lack of confidence. The open-ended companion statement to number five was: "Why do you feel prepared/not well prepared to be a consultor?" The two (who remained unmoved in their lack of confidence, as indicated in the post-test) responded respectively: "limited religious education" and "I do not feel that I know all aspects of the [parish] and its individual committees, yet!" The majority, who expressed confidence in being consultors, provided reasons that included: their reliance on prayer, involvement in parish ministries, length of time at the parish, knowledge of parish programs, and contact with many parishioners.

Statement eight won unanimous agreement on the post-test, winning over one dissenter from the pre-test. I was happy to see that the PPC members understood that the pastor does not need to consult with the council for every decision that he makes. As I indicated in the instructional session, sometimes it would be inappropriate and counter-productive to consult with the PPC. Some matters require "experts" (i.e., specialists or technically trained people). And unless the matter is one of major pastoral concern or is concerned with pastoral planning, the PPC is normally not consulted.

Statement number nine shows a strong mean between 3.0 and 4.0, in both pre and post-tests. Oddly enough, the post-test is slightly weaker. In either case, no more than two people disagreed with the statement that the pastor may consult with the PPC and come to a decision on his own. The implication is that a pastor may decide to do something other than what the PPC's consensus indicates. Normally, the pastor would abide by the PPC's recommendations. However, as Canon 536 indicates, the PPC possesses *a consultative vote only.*[6]

Regarding statement number ten, the lone dissenter was moved to agreement in the post-test. In the instructional presentation, I provided some examples indicating that there are times when a PPC must be consulted. The councilors may also have remembered the special session which we had together, to canvas

Session II: The Purpose and Nature of the Parish Pastoral Council

Table 8-A Purpose and Nature of PPC: Survey Responses

Survey Statement	Mean	Preferred Response by Respondents
1. The PPC allows the parish priest to surrender or diminish his role as the shepherd of the flock.	Pre-Test: 3.3 Post-Test:3.4	Pre-Test: 90.9% Post-Test: 90.9%
	Change: +0.1	Change: 0.0
2. It is important for the PPC members to have a basic knowledge of the responsibilities of the pastor.	Pre-Test: 3.5 Post-Test:3.6	Pre-Test: 100% Post-Test: 100%
	Change: +0.1	Change: 0.0
4. The pastor presides over the PPC.	Pre-Test: 3.1 Post-Test:3.5	Pre-Test: 81.8% Post-Test: 100%
	Change: +0.4	Change: +18.2%

[6] See the Catholic Church's *Code of Canon Law* (1983).

their support for a major parish expense. We were to renovate the stonework of the church's exterior. The diocese requires that projects over a certain minimum dollar-amount must be supported by both the PPC and the Parish Finance Council.

My reason for including a statement like number 12 was to expound upon the ecclesial context of the PPC. The PPC does not stand alone, nor does it exist for itself. The parish does not stand alone. It is part of an ecclesial context. I was certain that the councilors would all agree with the statement. My hypothesis was verified.

Statement number one, in Table 8-A, verifies my hypothesis that the majority of the councilors would disagree with the concept that the PPC and the pastor are "competitors"; i.e., a strong, active PPC will take away from the pastor's status as shepherd of the flock. Only one person out of eleven agreed with the statement on each survey instrument. Strangely enough, it was not the same person who checked off agreement each time.

All eleven survey respondents indicated agreement on the importance of knowing what the pastor's responsibilities are. The companion open-ended question was: "Why is it important for the PPC members to have a basic knowledge of the responsibilities of the pastor?"[7] A 39 year-old man, who had attended a workshop on the nature and purpose of the PPC, wrote: "Without the knowledge of the responsibilities of the pastor, a council could not help to advise

[7] See Appendix for Session II: *Nature and Purpose of PPC: Pre-Test and Post-Test Responses to Open-Ended Questions.*

on topics of discussion." This sentiment was echoed by several of the survey respondents. A 38 year-old, female member of the council, who had read the Diocese of Cleveland's PPC policy booklet wrote: "The council needs to assist the pastor in administering... the needs of the parish. A knowledge of these needs will help [to] make sure that the parishioners, ministries and committees are taken

Table 8-B Purpose and Nature of PPC: Survey Responses

Survey Statement	Mean	Preferred Responses by Respondents
5. The parish pastoral staff and the PPC are simply two different names for the same thing.	Pre-Test:3.2 PostTest:3.5	Pre-Test: 90.9% Post-Test: 90.9%
	Change: +0.3	Change: 0.0%
6. The pastor is both policy-maker and administrator of the parish. The PPC assists him in both areas.	Pre-Test:1.7 PostTest:1.9	Pre-Test: 0.00% Post-Test: 9.1%
	Change: +0.2	Change: +9.1%
7. The purpose of the PPC is to promote the spiritual growth of the parish via spiritual formation, pastoral planning, pastoral policy development, and communication.	Pre-Test:3.4 Post-Test:3.7	Pre-Test: 100% Post-Test: 100%
	Change: +0.3	Change: 0.0%
8. The members of the PPC should reflect the interests and needs of the parish community.	Pre-Test:3.6 PostTest:3.6	Pre-Test: 100% Post-Test: 100%
	Change: 0.0	Change: 0.0%

care of to the best of our abilit[y]." A 34 year-old woman who both read the policy handbook and attended a workshop on the PPC, offered a unique insight.

She said that it is important for the councilors to know the pastor's basic responsibilities in order "[t]o understand the limits that the PPC may have and the limits of the pastor's office".

Statement number four was inserted to help me learn what the councilors thought of the idea of the pastor presiding.[8] In the post-test, all of the respondents answered in the preferred way, by agreeing with the statement. There is a bit of ambiguity here. Our council's highest ranking elected officer is called the *president*. The president runs the meetings. However, the pastor is the one who is actually in charge of the PPC.

Looking now at Table 8-B, statement number five should not have caused the respondents any difficulty. Ten out of the eleven disagreed with the claim that the parish staff and PPC are two different names for the same thing. Only one person responded in the non-preferred way on pre-test and post-test. (Curiously, it was a different person each time.)

Statement number six proved to be a stumbling block for all but two people on the post-test. No one answered in the preferred way on the pre-test. As I explained earlier, my attempt, here, was to ascertain the councilors' ability to make the distinction between pastoral concerns and administrative acts, as they apply to the PPC[9]. It is not to suggest that the PPC has nothing to do with the administration of the parish, but, properly speaking, the primary purpose of the council is pastoral in nature. It is the parish staff (referred to in statement five) that assists the pastor in acts of administration.

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[8] See page 66 above.
[9] See page 67 above.

There were no dissenters responding to statement number seven. The claim made by the statement seems plausible enough to be endorsed by the councilors. Likewise, there was unanimous agreement with the claim made in statement number eight, that PPC members should reflect the needs and interests of the parish community. The awareness of the importance of the community's interests was indicated in response to the open-ended question: "[w]hat qualities do you bring to the Parish Pastoral Council?" A 41 year-old man who has been on the PPC for more than two years (of a three year term) wrote that his qualities

Table 8-C Purpose and Nature of PPC: Survey Responses

Survey Statement	Mean	Preferred Responses by Respondents
9. Membership in the PPC is open to registered members of the parish who are in full communion with the Church.	Pre-Test: 3.6 Post-Test: 3.6	Pre-Test: 100% Post-Test: 100%
	Change: 0.0	Change: 0.0%
11. There are several ways to select new members of the PPC.	Pre-Test: 2.4 Post-Test: 2.6	Pre-Test: 36.4% Post-Test: 63.6%
	Change: +0.2	Change: +27.2%
12. All members of the PPC are required to have limited terms.	Pre-Test: 2.0 Post-Test: 1.8	Pre-Test: 18.2% Post-Test: 18.2%
	Change: -0.2	Change: 0.00%
13. It is the responsibility of the PPC to implement the policies it recommends to the pastor.	Pre-Test: 2.1 Post-Test: 2.6	Pre-Test: 27.3% Post-Test: 36.4%
	Change: +0.5	Change: +9.1%

included being "a link to the people of the parish". A 29 year-old man (the youngest member of our PPC) who had no prior formal training as a councilor, stated that his qualities include the fact that he "attend[s] church regularly and talk[s] to members of the church". A 68 year-old woman who has been a member of our parish for many years, explained her qualities as stemming from her "[y]ears of volunteer service [and] years of living in the community".

Moving on to Table 8-C, responses to statement nine were not surprising. Only two out of eleven respondents had neither read the Cleveland Diocese's PPC policy booklet nor attended a workshop or seminar on parish pastoral councils. Statement 11, on the other hand, indicates a certain confusion among the councilors, on the issue of methods of selection of new PPC members. Two-thirds of the pre-test respondents indicated that they did not think there were several methods of selection. Half of them changed their position in the post-test, but there were still dissenters. In our PPC, we use two methods of selection: direct appointment and parish-voting. Another method (which we have not used, but is indicated in the Cleveland Diocese's policy booklet) is discernment.

I will admit, number 12 is tricky, if one forgets that some members of the PPC are ex-officio and, as such, do not have "limited terms". I suppose one could argue with the point and say that everyone has a limited term. However, elected members of the PPC are given terms that expire in one to three years (depending on the parish's bylaws). Two-thirds of the membership is *rotational*. Ex-officio members do not rotate in the same way.

Session III: Pastoral Planning

Table 9-A Survey Responses: Pastoral Planning:

Survey Statement	Mean	Preferred Responses by Respondents
1. Parish pastoral planning enables the Church to cope with changing needs of our society and emerging needs of people.	Pre-Test: 2.9 Post-Test: 3.5	Pre-Test: 75% Post-Test: 100%
	Change: +0.6	Change: 25%
2. Parish pastoral planning is the same thing as corporate and civic planning.	Pre-Test: 2.4 Post-Test:2.3	PreTest:37.5% Post-Test: 25%
	Change: -0.1	Change: -12.5%
3. Churches without plans for growth invariably stagnate.	Pre-Test: 3.4 Post-Test:3.8	Pre-Test:87.5% Post-Test:100%
	Change: +0.4	Change: +12.5%
4. Pastoral planning should involve the pastor, the PPC, and the whole parish.	Pre-Test: 3.00 Post-Test:3.00	Pre-Test: 75% Post-Test:63.%
	Change: 0.0	Change: -12.5%
5. The first step in the planning process is the formation of a parish mission statement.	Pre-Test: 3.5 Post-Test:3.4	Pre-Test: 100% Post-Test:87.%
	Change: -0.1	Change: -12.5%

I was surprised to learn that most of the councilors (72%) agreed with statement 13. Apparently, the respondents forgot about the role of commissions and committees in implementing pastoral policies developed by the PPC. The

post-test results are slightly better, but non-preferred responses are still in the majority. Perhaps my instructional presentation did not make the point adequately.

Statement one, in Table 9-A, seeks to discover the councilors' insight into the concept that pastoral planning must address the contemporary needs of the parish and wider community. Apparently, my instructional session convinced the two survey respondents who had indicated disagreement on the pre-test. My instructional session was not as effective regarding statement two. I had hypothesized that the majority of survey respondents would disagree with the claim that pastoral planning is the same thing as corporate and civic planning. As it was, the percentage of agreement went from 50% on the pre-test to 75% on the post-test. The councilors must understand, as I indicated in chapter three, that what differentiates pastoral planning from strategic planning in secular institutions is that the former "incorporates theological reflection into the planning process, bringing the light of the Gospel and our tradition of faith to the pastoral situation at hand."[10]

The responses to statement three offered no surprise to me. Most everyone on the pre-test and everyone on the post-test agreed that churches without plans for growth invariably stagnate. As a complement to statement three, I asked the councilors an open-ended question: "What are some obstacles to parish pastoral planning?[11]" A 30 year-old homemaker wrote: "... not being open to the needs of all [in the parish]." Another person wrote: "short-sight[ed]ness". A 40 year-old

[10] See page 73 above.
[11] See Appendix for Session III's *Responses to Pre-Test Open-Ended Questions.*

police officer and adult convert to the Catholic faith contributed this insight: "People do not like change in general. Planning and setting goals means taking a realistic view of where you are and what has been done." Not only do people need to be convinced of the necessity of pastoral planning, but also, they need to know the obstacles which impede effective planning.

Statement four had a constant mean of 3.00, on both pre-test and post-test. However, disagreement (the non-preferred response) increased from 25% to 37%. Only one person who disagreed, did so both times. So, there was some confusion on the question about involvement of other parties in the pastoral planning process. Surely, the PPC members know that the pastor is involved in the process. The stumbling block must be the claim that the whole parish is involved. This is just as I had hypothesized. My belief was that the councilors would agree to the statement, although some of them might not understand the role of the parish in the planning process.

The companion open-ended question to statement four was: "What are some ways for assessing the needs of our parish?" All of the respondents suggested ways of canvassing members of the parish (i.e., involving the parish). Answers included: "Ask the parish[ioners] what they want, and listen!" The respondents even suggested methods, for example: surveys, face-to-face encounters, open forums and visits by the parish priest.

Although someone lapsed into disagreement on the post-test, in responding to statement five, the majority of respondents (100% on the pre-test) agreed on the importance of a parish mission statement for planning purposes. To elicit further

ideas on the subject, I asked the following open-ended question. "What do you believe is the mission of our parish?" A 41 year-old high school graduate and member of the parish for 11 years puts the mission into evangelistic terms. He writes, "[the mission of the parish is] to help guide as many people as possible in the ways of Jesus." A 30 year-old homemaker and convert to the Catholic faith

Table 9-B Pastoral Planning: Survey Responses

Survey Statement	Mean	Preferred Responses by Respondents
6. Planning for the future is something like shooting in the dark because it is difficult to predict what the parish will need in years to come.	Pre-Test: 3.0 Post-Test:3.1	Pre-Test: 87.5% Post-Test:100%
	Change: +0.1	Change: +12.5%
7. The idea of setting goals for the parish is to make concrete what we would like to see happen in the next ten to fifteen years.	Pre-Test: 2.1 Post-Test:2.9	Pre-Test: 25% Post-Test: 75%
	Change: +0.8	Change: +50%
8. The more goals a parish sets for itself, the more vibrant the parish will be.	Pre-Test: 2.8 Post-Test:2.9	Pre-Test: 62.5% Post-Test: 75%
	Change: +0.1	Change: +12.5%
9. Parish pastoral planning necessarily involves program development and evaluation.	Pre-Test: 3.0 Post-Test:3.4	Pre-Test: 100% Post-Test:100%
	Change: +0.4	Change: 0.0%

speaks of the mission in terms of education and growth in Christ: "[the mission of the parish is to provide]... education [in] our faith, involvement..., and ultimately to [help us] grow closer to our Lord ." Another homemaker, aged 34, and college

educated, described the mission of the parish in this way: "[t]o provide spiritual [and] emotional support for our parishioners."

Table 9-B, above, shows that the majority of the counselors did not understand pastoral planning as akin to "shooting in the dark". This is hopeful. My suspicion was that some of the counselors might not realize that the planning process uses relevant facts, data, and working hypotheses, rather than being merely a hunch or a conjecture about future realities. However, as indicated in the responses to statement seven, the majority of the councilors were fooled into thinking that pastoral planning involves the formation of goals and objectives that are applicable to the next ten to fifteen years. Because of the rapid change of society, pastoral plans must concern themselves with a much shorter period, namely, three to five years.[12] As indicated in the post-test responses, most of the councilors learned from my presentation and switched to the preferred response to statement seven.

The claim that the more goals a parish sets for itself, the more vibrant it will be (statement eight) proved to be divisive on the pre-test. Almost half of the councilors agreed with the statement. I was not surprised, because (on the surface) the statement seems to make sense. However, it is not practical for a parish to develop more goals than it can handle. The results on the post-test were slightly more edifying.

Statement nine's claim that pastoral planning necessarily involves program development and evaluation, was met with unanimous agreement on both pre-test

[12] See page 74 above.

and post-test. In fact, three of the councilors moved from mere agreement to "strongly agree". As a result, the mean increases.

In the next chapter I will evaluate the project and draw conclusions based on the research indicated above.

CHAPTER FIVE

REFLECTION, EVALUATION, AND CONCLUSION

What was Gained through the Project's Implementation

To further specify the unmentioned agent of the above statement, I will ask, "What did *I* gain from the project's implementation?" Being academically inclined, I derived much personal fruit from the required study which the project entailed. My favorite part of the project was doing the work for chapter two, the theology chapter. I began doing the research for the chapter in June of 2005. I completed the draft by November of 2005. In order to devote myself to the research, I postponed my first annual visit of parish homes to the following summer. Had I not done so, I would not have been able to complete the theology chapter in a timely fashion. It turns out to have been one of the best decisions I made, regarding developing a good theological basis for the project.

What did I gain from the research required for chapter two? First I was able to synthesize and summarize Vatican II and post-Vatican II ecclesiology, to better understand the nature and mission of the Church. To do so I drew from the well of Church documents, particularly *Lumen Gentium* (also known as Vatican II's *Constitution on the Church*). I then utilized Avery Dulles' classic *Models of the Church*, which I originally read in the seminary (as a student studying for the priesthood), over 25 years ago. Dulles' work had been revised in 2002, to include the ecclesiology of Pope John Paul II. The revision intrigued me. I then read the 2002 version and used it in my research. It was worth reading a second time. In fact, I derived much more out of it for my work for the Doctor of Ministry project,

than when I originally read it before ordination. I am particularly appreciative of the insight that no one model suffices to describe the mystery of the Church. The models tend to be heuristic devices, not unlike the varied imagery found for the Church in the Sacred Scripture (e.g., the Church as flock, bride, Body of Christ, etc.). Each has something to offer. As a priest (and a Catholic) I must regard the Church, not only as a mystery of faith, but also as something that people can understand, according to their capacity to do so. I believe that appropriate models fill the need of faith that seeks understanding.

I thoroughly enjoyed researching the history of the parish, and the quest for developing a theology of the parish. I was intrigued by James Corriden's comment that no one has yet written a comprehensive history of the parish.[1] I was also impressed to learn of the contribution of the Council of Trent, which developed the so-called *parochial principle*[2]. Today, we take it for granted that most people's experience of the Church takes place at the parish level. Yet, the parish itself is the result of centuries of development. It is the history of this development, and the nature of the parish, as being a distinct entity and ecclesial structure, though one not specifically of divine institution, which has caused many people to wonder just how one can posit a theology of parish. Prior to doing the research for the project, I was not aware of the theological difficulties. As a parish priest, it is especially important that I have a theological grasp on this mysterious thing called the *parish*. I appreciated Charles Davis's review of the

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[1] See page 24 above.
[2] See page 29 above.

attempts to develop a theology of parish.[3] His conclusion, I believe, is somewhat pessimistic. He believes that there is only a theology of the Church, and not, specifically, of the parish. I am grateful, in this regard, for the contribution of Sabbas Kilian, who addresses the difficulty by positing, as Dulles did, the use of theological models to understand the parish. No one model suffices, yet each has something to offer. The parish is formed by the word of God, the Eucharist, and it makes present something of the mystery of the Church. The most *avant-garde* model employed by Kilian, was that of Michael Winter.[4] Winter's insight is that a parish needs to be understood as a community restructured into small communities. Although Winter has his own ideas about how this might be carried out in practice, a parish priest can develop a parish program which encourages the formation of faith-communities. Presently, at Immaculate Conception, we have two formalized small faith-communities, with a third in the making. My next step is to include these communities in the PPC's diagram of parish "organizations". Ultimately, the community-idea can be applied in some way to the PPC itself, at least in an informal way. We have the same bond of faith. We are baptized. We belong to the same Church, we are joined in the Eucharist, we pray together, and so forth.

I learned much from the canonical perspective on the question of what it means to be a parish. Charles Davis' critique of the 1917 Code of Canon Law's definition of parish as lacking any reference to the people, I found provocative. Perhaps it was an oversight on the part of the codifiers. It may have been

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[3] See pp. 30 to 34 above.
[4] See pages 41 to 42 above.

assumed as an unwritten-given. Davis' critique has helped me to appreciate the canonical development found in the 1983 Code of Canon Law, as affirmed by James Corriden. The latter writes: "The identity of the parish in the revised canons is clearer and more accurate than ever before."[5]

I found very enlightening, the history of the Parish Pastoral Council. Prior to 1973, there were no Church documents (published by the bishops or the Holy See), which called for, or encouraged the institution of the PPC, as we know it today. This is not to say that councils did not exist, but they were not yet *canonized*, as parochial structures. Being that I was ordained in 1982, in a certain sense, I am on the ground floor of the development of the council as an entity with a legitimacy, structure and purpose of its own. This being the case, I believe, the present Doctor of Ministry project is particularly relevant.

After completing chapter two, I started the practical research of designing the survey instruments and instructional sessions for the next phase of the project. I completed chapter three while on a visit to Rome, Italy, in March of 2006. What did I gain from this? It gave me an opportunity to develop my own understanding of the PPC, concerning three areas: consultation, the nature and purpose of the PPC, and pastoral planning. I was especially benefited from my study of parish pastoral planning, and the council's role therein. A pastor consults with many people and groups (even informally), but pastoral planning is specific to the PPC. I hope to be able to use what I have learned and put it into practice for the good of the parish.

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[5] See page 43 above.

Chapter four, for me, was the most challenging chapter to compose. I had to learn how to use the data analysis software program called SPSS. For the first time in my life, I entered data into such a program, and then had to present it in the context of a manuscript. It took me some time to be able to carry out this aspect of the project. Once the data was entered, I had to develop pertinent tables to use for the presentation. Eventually, I learned how to insert the tables into the supporting text, while observing such requirements as maintaining proper margins. I suppose one could say that I gained a certain technical proficiency by doing the project.

What did the councilors gain from the project? The following are some of the responses to my open-ended question: "What are some of the things you have learned from Fr. Donnelly's several presentations on the Parish Pastoral Council?"[6] A 34-year old homemaker wrote: "I think, most of this is common sense, but everything has been defined will." A 41-year old husband and father provided the following insight. "I have learned that as part of the Parish Council, it is important for me to understand what the parish needs and also how the pastor wants to go about meeting those needs and to help to the best of my ability." A 30-year old homemaker was impressed with the concept of pastoral planning. "I have a clear picture of why we need to implement pastoral planning for the growth of our parish." A married woman who teaches professionally, wrote: "I have learned the true dynamic of the way a council *should* be! Great teachings.... I hope we can work together to implement all of our ideas and meet our goals." A 29 year-old man who is a funeral director by avocation, stated: "I have learned

that the priest is the main [governor] of the parish. However, he needs [the] Pastoral Council to give him good information about the parish in order to make good decisions and goals for our future." A 39-year old salesman, who has not yet been a Catholic for five years, summed it up well. "With pastoral planning, this Pastoral Council can help guide the parish to be a vibrant church. This Parish Pastoral Council is important to [the] success of following [the] mission statement."

Critical Evaluation of the Project's Strengths

I believe that the presentation in chapter two, concerning ecclesiology, the history, theology and canonical aspect of the parish, and the information concerning the development of the PPC as an ecclesial structure, is a strong element of this project. There is also much practical information to be gleaned from the three instructional sessions about which the research instruments (surveys) were composed. Certainly, the subject matter of the project is a strength, in that the PPC has a vital role in the life of the parish today. Without an educated and well-formed PPC, a parish will be hampered in its mission.

Areas for Further Research and Reflection

I believe that it would be a worthwhile project to present to PPC members an ecclesiology that is expressed through the use of models. Avery Dulles developed five models. Which model(s) do councilors find useful to help them understand the mystery of the Church? Which councilors are not yet aware of the

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[6] See Appendix for Session III's *Responses to Open Ended Post-Test Questions.*

model{s} to which they subscribe? It would be helpful to discover whether there are other models. Everyone, I suppose, has some operating model of the Church. One of the reasons for lack of participation in the mission of the Church, for example, can be traced, perhaps, to a defective model. In this case, the model might be the Church as a kind of club or organization to which one belongs and expects certain services in return (a spiritual/sacramental "supermarket", let's say). I do not think that this kind of model would necessarily be the operational model of a PPC member, but, it might be good to realize that there are people in the parish who tend to think of the Church in this fashion ("consumer-Catholicism"). How does a PPC come to terms with such things?

Another area for further research would be to examine the PPC concerning models of the parish. It is important to see the parish according to a certain set of paradigms. If the parish is formed by the Eucharist, what ramifications does this have for the PPC and pastoral planning? Do the members of the PPC spend requisite time before the Blessed Sacrament? How frequently and devoutly do they participate at Mass? What can be done to elevate the parish's appreciation for the Mass and for adoration of the Eucharist?

If the parish is a community formed by the word of God, how are the councilors devoting themselves to prayer and meditation on the Scripture? How is the word of God employed in PPC meetings? What can be done in the parish to plan for growth in the people's love for the Lord as he makes himself present in the sacred text?

If a parish can be construed as a community of communities, what does this mean for the PPC in its self-understanding? What are the communal aspects of the PPC? How can community be developed among the members? Also, how does the parish promote community? Are we all merely a collective of individuals? I believe that too many people in parishes today, seem to have this idea. (Even the way people seat themselves at Mass – far apart from one another – seems to betray this type of thinking). Pastoral planning must take such things into consideration.

Conclusion

What are the ramifications of the project for the wider, ministerial community? I am not sure that I am competent to comment on ramifications beyond the Catholic Church because of differing ecclesial structures (e.g., church boards, boards of trustees), and whether or not there is anything equivalent to a parish pastoral council as the Catholic Church understands it. However, I can certainly offer an insight for the Catholic community on this point.

Before becoming a pastor in 2003, I served as an associate pastor in five different parish assignments, over the course of 20 years. In three of the parishes, there was either no existing PPC, or merely a "stearing committee", which served as the beginnings of a council. Where a council existed, the associate pastor(s) was neither encouraged nor expected to be present. In a fourth parish assignment, it was manifest (from reports) that the pastor was not clear on how to use the council. There was no systematic training or direction for council members. In

yet another parish, I was expected to be at the council meetings, but they were merely forums for reporting to the pastor. The pastor did not employ the PPC to help in pastoral planning. As a result, there was no systemic provision for pastoral planning. All planning was done by the pastor, and, as such, it was quite limited in scope.

What I have learned about the PPC is owed to my own study and discussion with others who were knowledgeable. I suppose that the pastors with whom I had worked, over the years, were dealing with something that they did not quite understand, (i.e, the nature and purpose of the PPC). I believe that the wider ministerial community can benefit by examining works such as the present project, in an effort to develop a PPC that is effective and helpful to the pastor, as a consultative group and a planning mechanism.

In the present time, many Catholic dioceses have Pastoral Planning Offices. I did some of my research in the Diocese of Cleveland's office. It is clear that there is much to be developed in the area of PPC's and pastoral planning. I do not pretend to have the last word on the subject, but, perhaps it can serve as a "springboard" for future research and development.

How has the project served to enhance my ministry? The timing of the project could not have been better. I began the Doctor of Ministry program as an associate pastor. Shortly thereafter, I became a pastor. What should a pastor look to develop? A pastor needs to build up the parish. What is a better means for building up the parish than by having an effective and educated PPC? The project helped me not only to meet the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree,

but also (primarily) it assisted me in helping to develop the parish via the PPC. When I arrived at Immaculate Conception, there was a PPC in place, but it was clear that there was work to be done. In the meantime, the project has assisted me in helping the PPC to revise its bylaws, to instill within the members a sense of mission, an appreciation of the importance of pastoral planning and the development of a parish mission statement. The last item is currently in progress.

What are the contributions made by this project to the field of practical theology? Theology, of course, is the study of God, which is developed by reflecting on the data of revelation. Practical theology is concerned with *doing* something. Even God is practical. He is the most practical. The Holy Trinity does not merely exist, but engages in a mission. First, the world was created. Then, it was redeemed. The saving work of redemption is applied through the ministry of the Church, with her sacraments, creed, prayer, and moral teachings. What does it mean to be a Christian? What does it mean to be incorporated into the Church? What is a parish and its mission? How does a parish carry out its mission? What is the role of the PPC in helping people to live as citizens of the kingdom that Christ came to establish?

This project seeks to address the practical concerns of localizing the mission of the Trinity, and applying it to the lives of many, via the parish. The parish needs spiritual leadership, exercised by the pastor and lay leaders of the PPC, if it is to be more than merely an institution that serves spiritual "consumers". A parish must be proactive, in today's constantly changing world. There must be a solid, parish program, which serves the work of evangelizing, making disciples

and lay apostles. However, the parish, as parish, must not merely consist of "programs", but must reflect something of the communal nature of the Church and the Trinity. The parish is a community of communities. It is my belief that the PPC, if properly trained and employed by the pastor, can do more for the Church and its mission, at the parish level, than any other ecclesial structure today.

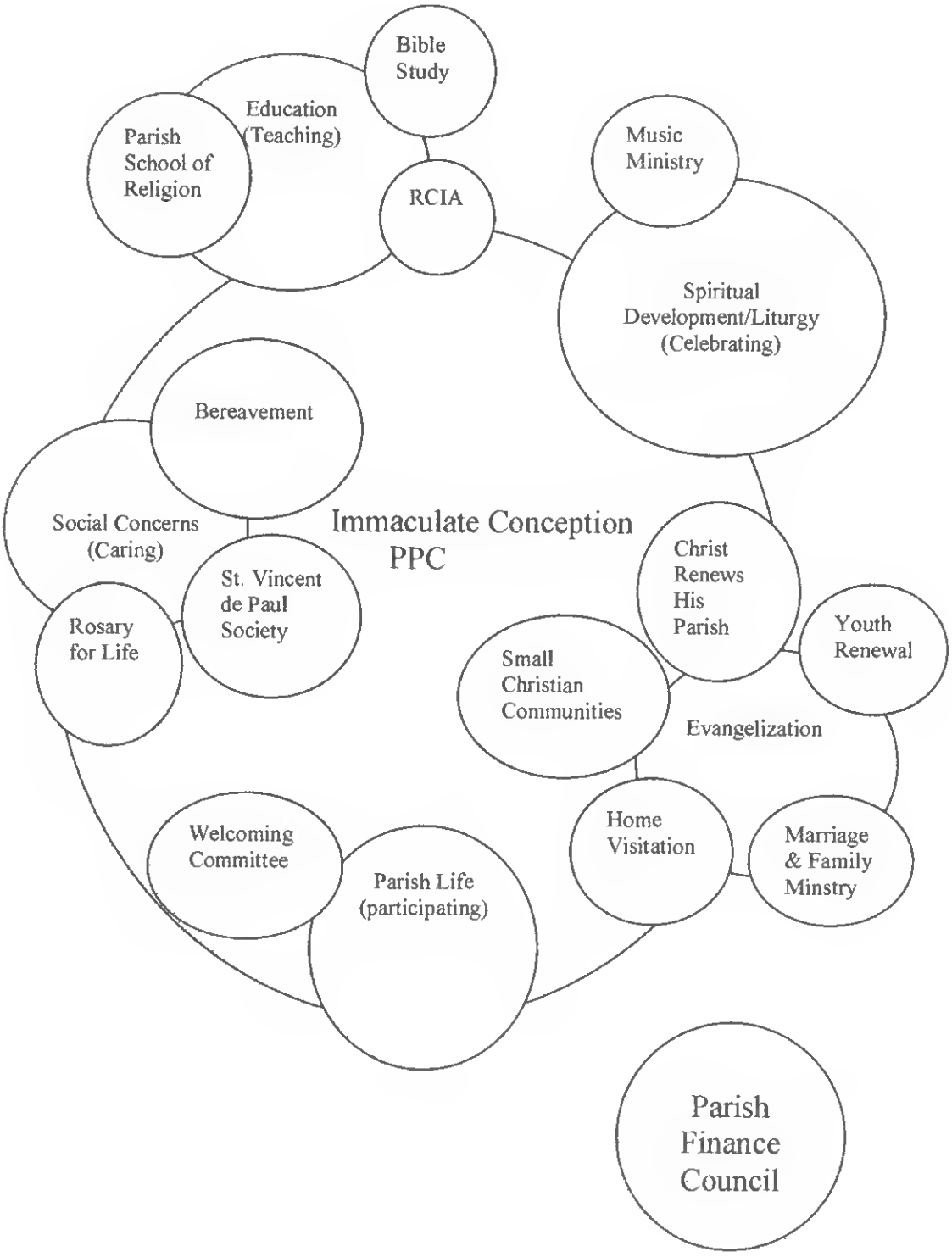
APPENDIX A

STATUS ANIMARUM
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, MADISON, OHIO
(STATISTICAL INFORMATION)

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2002	2003	2004	2005
Total Catholic Persons Registered	1100	2800	4062	4455	3709	3605	3533	3329
Total Catholic households	550	660	1043	1243	1572	1481	1386	1264
Average Weekend Mass Attendance*		1161	1301		880	863	813	814
Pupils in P.S.R. (grades 1-12)				587	328	305	256	269
Infant Baptisms	56	48	93	83	69	51	51	41
Adult Baptisms	4		6		12	11	2	2
First Communions	60	60	99	74	35	54	49	39
Confirmations			72	40	61	45	38	18
Marriages	15	5	24	22	25	22	17	12
Deaths	21	16	13	29	47	43	42	35

*Based on annual October Mass attendance count

APPENDIX B
PARISH ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL



APPENDIX C
SESSION I SURVEYS

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Check the appropriate boxes or fill in the blank, as indicated below:
Male _____
Female _____

Age _____

Education:
High school _____
College _____
Graduate studies _____

Religious education:
Catholic grade school(s) _____
CCD (PSR) _____
Convert classes _____
RCIA _____
Home study _____

Occupation _____

Length of time at Immaculate Conception _____

How long have you been Catholic?
_____ Not yet five years
_____Five to ten years
_____ Ten to 20 years
_____ Life-long

Marital status:
_____ Single (never married)
_____ Married
_____ Divorced
_____ Widowed

Do you have children?
_____ Yes (How many? _____)
_____ No

SESSION I PRE-TEST: CONSULTATION

Directions: This survey contains both *statements* and *questions*. Please check your level of agreement/disagreement with the statements. Please answer the questions.

1. It is necessary for a pastor to consult with his Parish Pastoral Council before making any decision.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

2. The Parish Pastoral Council is the only group in the parish which provides the pastor with the consultation that he needs.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

3. The best way for a Parish Pastoral Council to reach a decision is by majority vote.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

4. A parish can benefit much from a pastor consulting with his Parish Pastoral Council.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

5. I feel well prepared to be a consultor for the pastor
   _____I strongly agree
   _____I agree
   _____I disagree
   _____I strongly disagree

6. Why do you feel well prepared/not well prepared to be a consultor?

7. Do you believe that there are any obstacles in the Parish Pastoral Council's consultative role? What are they?

8. In some cases, a pastor does not need to consult the Parish Pastoral Council.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

9. In making a decision, a pastor may consult with the Parish Pastoral Council and come to the decision on his own.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

10. Sometimes it is necessary for a pastor to have the consensus of the Parish Pastoral Council before taking a certain course of action.
    _____ I strongly agree
    _____ I agree
    _____ I disagree
    _____ I strongly disagree

11. What does "consultation" mean to you?

12. The process of consultation must reflect our love for the Church, her mission, and our common discipleship.
    _____ I strongly agree
    _____ I agree
    _____ I disagree
    _____ I strongly disagree

SESSION I POST-TEST: CONSULTATION

Directions: This survey contains both *statements* and *questions*. Please check your level of agreement/disagreement with the statements. Please answer the questions.

1. It is necessary for a pastor to consult with his Parish Pastoral Council before making any decision.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

2. The Parish Pastoral Council is the only group in the parish which provides the pastor with the consultation that he needs.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

3. The best way for a Parish Pastoral Council to reach a decision is by majority vote.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

4. A parish can benefit much from a pastor consulting with his Parish Pastoral Council.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

5. I feel well prepared to be a consultor for the pastor
   _____I strongly agree
   _____I agree
   _____I disagree
   _____I strongly disagree

6. Over the course of the next couple of meetings, what issues do you think Fr. Donnelly should cover that would be helpful to your understanding and growth as a Parish Pastoral Council member?

7. Regarding obstacles to the Parish Pastoral Council's role as a consultative body to the pastor, what have you learned?

8. In some cases, a pastor does not need to consult the Parish Pastoral Council.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

9. In making a decision, a pastor may consult with the Parish Pastoral Council and come to the decision on his own.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

10. Sometimes it is necessary for a pastor to have the consensus of the Parish Pastoral Council before taking a certain course of action.
    _____ I strongly agree
    _____ I agree
    _____ I disagree
    _____ I strongly disagree

11. What aspects of the Fr. Donnelly's presentation gave you new insights into consultation?

12. The process of consultation must reflect our love for the Church, her mission, and our common discipleship.
    _____ I strongly agree
    _____ I agree
    _____ I disagree
    _____ I strongly disagree

APPENDIX D
SESSION II SURVEYS

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Check the appropriate boxes or fill in the blanks, as indicated below.

_____ Male
_____ Female

Age _____

Education:
High school _____
College _____
Graduate studies _____

Length of time on Parish Pastoral Council
One year or less _____
Between one and two years _____
Longer than two years _____

I have read the Cleveland Diocese's *Parish Pastoral Council Policy* booklet
_____ Yes
_____ No

In the past, I have attended a workshop or seminar on Parish Pastoral Councils
_____ Yes
_____ No

SESSION II PRE-TEST: NATURE AND PURPOSE OF PPC

Directions: This survey contains both *statements* and *questions*. Please check your level of agreement/disagreement with the statements. Please answer the questions.

1. The Parish Pastoral Council allows the parish priest (the pastor) to surrender or diminish his role as the shepherd of the flock.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

2. It is important for Parish Pastoral Council members to have a basic knowledge of the responsibilities of the pastor.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

3. Why is it important/unimportant for Parish Pastoral Council members to have a basic knowledge of the responsibilities of the pastor?

4. The pastor presides over the Parish Pastoral Council.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

5. The parish Pastoral Staff and the Parish Pastoral Council are simply two different names for the same thing.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

6. The pastor is both policy-maker and administrator of the parish. The Parish Pastoral Council assists him in both areas.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

7. The purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council is to promote the spiritual growth of the parish via spiritual formation, pastoral planning, pastoral policy-development, and communication.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

8. The members of the Parish Pastoral Council should reflect the interests and needs of the parish community.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

9. Membership in the Parish Pastoral Council is open to registered members of the parish who are in full communion with the Church.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

10. What, in your opinion, are some qualities that prospective members of the Parish Pastoral Council should possess?

11. There are several ways to select new members of the Parish Pastoral Council.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

12. All members of the Parish Pastoral Council are required to have limited terms.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

13. It is the responsibility of the Parish Pastoral Council to implement the policies that it recommends to the pastor.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

SESSION II POST-TEST: NATURE AND PURPOSE OF PPC

Directions: This survey contains both *statements* and *questions*. Please check your level of agreement/disagreement with the statements. Please answer the questions.

1. The Parish Pastoral Council allows the parish priest (the pastor) to surrender or diminish his role as the shepherd of the flock.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

2. It is important for Parish Pastoral Council members to have a basic knowledge of the responsibilities of the pastor.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

3. Why is it important/unimportant for Parish Pastoral Council members to have a basic knowledge of the responsibilities of the pastor?

4. The pastor presides over the Parish Pastoral Council.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

5. The parish Pastoral Staff and the Parish Pastoral Council are simply two different names for the same thing.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

6. The pastor is both policy-maker and administrator of the parish. The Parish Pastoral Council assists him in both areas.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

7. The purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council is to promote the spiritual growth of the parish via spiritual formation, pastoral planning, pastoral policy-development, and communication.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

8. The members of the Parish Pastoral Council should reflect the interests and needs of the parish community.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

9. Membership in the Parish Pastoral Council is open to registered members of the parish who are in full communion with the Church.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

10. What qualities do you bring to the Parish Pastoral Council?

11. There are several ways to select new members of the Parish Pastoral Council.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

12. All members of the Parish Pastoral Council are required to have limited terms.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

13. It is the responsibility of the Parish Pastoral Council to implement the policies that it recommends to the pastor.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

APPENDIX E
SESSION III SURVEYS

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Check the appropriate boxes or fill in the blank, as indicated below:
Male _____
Female _____

Age _____

Education:
High school _____
College _____
Graduate studies _____

Religious education:
Catholic grade school(s) _____
CCD (PSR) _____
Convert classes _____
RCIA _____
Home study _____

Occupation _____

Length of time at Immaculate Conception _____

How long have you been Catholic?
_____ Not yet five years
_____Five to ten years
_____ Ten to 20 years
_____ Life-long

Marital status:
_____ Single (never married)
_____ Married
_____ Divorced
_____ Widowed

SESSION III PRE-TEST: PARISH PASTORAL PLANNING

Directions: This survey contains both *statements* and *questions*. Please check your level of agreement/disagreement with the statements. Please answer the questions.

1. Parish pastoral planning enables the Church to cope with the changing needs of our society and the emerging needs of people.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

2. Parish pastoral planning is the same thing as corporate and civic planning.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

3. Churches without plans for growth invariably stagnate.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

4. Pastoral planning should involve the pastor, the Parish Pastoral Council and the whole parish.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

5. The first step in the planning process is the formation of a parish mission statement.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

6. Planning for the future is something like shooting in the dark because it is difficult to predict what the parish will need in the years to come.

   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

7. The idea of setting goals for the parish is to make concrete what we would like to see happen in the next ten to fifteen years.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

8. The more goals a parish sets for itself, the more vibrant the parish will be.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

9. Parish pastoral planning necessarily involves program development and evaluation.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

10. What are some obstacles to parish pastoral planning?

11. In a brief statement, what do you believe is the mission of our parish?

12. What are some ways for assessing the needs of our parish?

SESSION III POST-TEST: PARISH PASTORAL PLANNING

Directions: This survey contains both *statements* and *questions*. Please check your level of agreement/disagreement with the statements. Please answer the questions.

1. Parish pastoral planning enables the Church to cope with the changing needs of our society and the emerging needs of people.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

2. Parish pastoral planning is the same thing as corporate and civic planning.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

3. Churches without plans for growth invariably stagnate.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

4. Pastoral planning should involve the pastor, the Parish Pastoral Council and the whole parish.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

5. The first step in the planning process is the formation of a parish mission statement.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

6. Planning for the future is something like shooting in the dark because it is difficult to predict what the parish will need in the years to come.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

7. The idea of setting goals for the parish is to make concrete what we would like to see happen in the next ten to fifteen years.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

8. The more goals a parish sets for itself, the more vibrant the parish will be.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

9. Parish pastoral planning necessarily involves program development and evaluation.
   _____ I strongly agree
   _____ I agree
   _____ I disagree
   _____ I strongly disagree

10. How can we, as a parish, overcome any obstacles to parish pastoral planning?

11. What are some of the things that you have learned from Fr. Donnelly's several presentations on the Parish Pastoral Council? (His topics were: consultation, the nature and mission of the Parish Pastoral Council, and pastoral planning.)

12. What other issues, concerning Parish Pastoral Councils, would you like to see covered in the future?

APPENDIX F
QUALITATIVE DATA

Session 1: *Consultation*-- Pre-Test Responses to Open-Ended Questions

Question 6: Why do you feel prepared/unprepared to be a consultor?	Question 7: Do you believe that there are any obstacles to the PPC's consultative role? What are they?	Question 11: What does *consultation* mean to you?
		Help the pastor see the lay side of the action
I am confident that we could figure out the best result for anything through conversation and prayer, and also be aware of things that maybe weren't the best ideas and know when to change them.	Yes. When dealing with so many other people of different ages, sexes, strong beliefs... it sometimes makes difficult but that is also a strength that is important to have	The ability to talk something out and hear other points of view so that you don't only see one side of something before making a decision.
[I] have been involved with t he PSR program for 26 years, observed families and have been told things in confidence.	No, the priest needs the support of council.	Asking for support of decisions made.... People of the parish voice their opinions to us. We can bring them to the attention of father and council.
Length and amount of time involved at Immaculate Conception Strong commitment to make this a vibrant parish	Not involved with council long enough to be able to answer this	Exchange of information to get a better understanding of a topic
I do not feel that I know all aspects of the church and its individual committees yet!	The lack of information being brought to the meeting [It] seems [that] there is a wall between certain individuals.	Finding another point of view Making sure that decisions are well thought out
I am active in the parish and I have concerns and would do my best to serve.	Not at this time	To get together and talk through situations using experience and knowledge to come to a good decision

Question 6: Why do you feel prepared/unprepared to be a consultor?	Question 7: Do you believe that there are any obstacles to the PPC's consultative role? What are they?	Question 11: What does *consultation* mean to you?
Life experiences	Not that I have seen	Dialogue between members and pastor The pastor listening and question[ing] for understanding [in order] to come to a decision *helped* by *their* input
.Experience in the parish and in the parish ministry	Lack of focus, lack of organization Need a vision, e.g., pastoral plan	It means listening to the views and concerns of the council members and considering their views when making decisions. This is different than the board of directors in a business because of the pastoral and canonical nature of the decision making
I spend a lot of time during the day n prayer and reflection and reading scripture and I truly love and thank God that he has called me to be his follower	I sense at times there may be... a personal agenda with some [as] to how this parish and our pastor should be.	To see as a whole how people think on certain subjects of concern
I may be in contact with parishioners [with whom] the pastor does not regularly speak.	With some regularity in leadership, no	In our case, giving the pastor a wider outlook than he may be aware of
Limited religious education	No, not with the variety of knowledge/education of this council('s) members	Be aware of each council member's opinion
Experience in community/church after 34 years	No, communication is the key.	Consultation means getting an opinion... on a topic. Once the information is discussed, then a choice is made....

Question 6: Why do you feel prepared/unprepared to be a consultor?	Question 7: Do you believe that there are any obstacles to the PPC's consultative role? What are they?	Question 11: What does *consultation* mean to you?
I know a lot of people in the parish and am involved in many different things.	To an extent.... The council is a small body. We have a large parish and although people are getting more involved, there is a small amount of representation at council.	Advise and inform. Ask for a sharing of ideas.

Session I: *Consultation* – Post-Test Responses to Open-Ended Questions

Question 6: Over the course of the next couple of meetings, what issues do you think Fr. Donnelly should cover that would be helpful to your understanding and growth as a Parish Pastoral Council member?	Question 7: Regarding obstacles to the Parish Pastoral Council's role as a consultative body to the pastor, what have you learned?	Question 11: What aspects of Fr. Donnelly's presentation gave you new insights into consultation?
We need formality and [to] set guidelines to keep us focused and on track, and ways to monitor what we are doing.	That consultation with each other as a group can help to breach some obstacles	It made me start to think differently about the way we are doing things and hoping to get to a point where *everyone* start[s] being active in the council.
I learned a lot today… very informative	How much of a responsibility council has….	Realize the responsibilities council has
Better understanding of what is meant by pastoral planning	Not fully understanding subject being consulted upon Lack of discipleship	Better understanding of how PPC works and its role in our parish
[In] what areas of the overall running of the church does [the pastor] need help? Information on the committees that are currently in place and how they are run	That my lack of knowledge in some areas hurt[s] my ability to consult	The fact that each member of the council needs to be in a "good place" internally in order to contribute Living in faith and gaining knowledge of the church are important part[s] of the council
Prayer and discernment	That I need to pray and ask for discernment [in] my role as a council member	All of it was very informative for me.

Question 6: Over the course of the next couple of meetings, what issues do you think Fr. Donnelly should cover that would be helpful to your understanding and growth as a Parish Pastoral Council member?	Question 7: Regarding obstacles to the Parish Pastoral Council's role as a consultative body to the pastor, what have you learned?	Question 11: What aspects of Fr. Donnelly's presentation gave you new insights into consultation?
What is a pastoral plan?	The [receptivity] of the pastor and the willingness of council members [are] key to effective consultation and decision-making by the pastor.	Clarifying the role of council as that of pastoral planning and consultation Very good presentation
What specific issues should pastoral council address that we have not?	I've learned when the pastor does not need to consult.	Consultation with lay people occurs at every level (sic).
Review planning and specific goals (short term and long term) with council.	The parish council may not always have this best decision (sic).	There are multiple ways to come up with a decision.
Proper ways of discernment over issues with the Church New ways to reach people and bring [them] back to the Church	The only real obstacle is what each person brings by way of internal conflict. Faith and prayer within the council and [each] individual would be of great aid.	The process of consultation [itself] and, for the first time, guidelines [concerning] what the council is supposed to do.

Question 6: Over the course of the next couple of meetings, what issues do you think Fr. Donnelly should cover that would be helpful to your understanding and growth as a Parish Pastoral Council member?	Question 7: Regarding obstacles to the Parish Pastoral Council's role as a consultative body to the pastor, what have you learned?	Question 11: What aspects of Fr. Donnelly's presentation gave you new insights into consultation?
I would like to go over the mission of the parish council in detail.		That we all play an important role in the mission of the Church – Bringing concerns to our pastor
How can we as a council better help in pastoral planning? What does the church need from the council? How does the church benefit from the PPC?	Some members may not be as informed as they need to be to help make decisions. If we are not reaching a consensus about something, the consultation may backfire.	I agree with the ideas of using practical wisdom for consultation. Also, discernment and prophecy are sometimes things that are overlooked.
Maybe Fr. can elaborate on specific issues [on which] he must consult, and those [issues that do not require consultation]		

Session II: *Purpose and Nature of the Parish Pastoral Council*
Pre-Test Responses to Open-Ended Questions

Question 3: Why is it important for the Parish Pastoral Council members to have a basic knowledge of the responsibilities of the pastor?	Question 10: What, in your opinion, are some qualities that prospective members of the Parish Pastoral Council should possess?
Without the knowledge of the responsibilities of the pastor, a council could not help to advise on topics of discussion.	Attend church weekly and be open to the grace of God by following the path he leads.
To understand the needs he has [in attending] to the needs of the parishioners and ministries	Willingness to share ideas and preparedness to attend to the needs of *all* parishioners Members must work together with each other and the pastor to see that everyone within the parish has an idea of what the parish offers.
To better understand what needs to be done in helping the pastor	Honesty, open-minded[ness], care about the parish, [regularity in Sunday Mass attendance], [helpfulness] at church functions
To understand the limits that the PPC may have and the limits of the pastor's office	A PPC member should be active in the parish. PPC membership as a whole needs to be diverse to address as many areas of church [need] as possible.
To know their responsibilities and to help [the pastor] when needed	Knowledge of parish life and workings of the staff [and] involvement in some areas of the parish, such as the [Parish School of Religion and] church activities
To answer questions from members of the parish	Registered member, sincere in wanting to meet needs and to get more members involved
To be able to better assist in making decisions with/for the pastor To help guide the church [to] grow in this community	Be spiritual, outgoing, adult, vocal, educated
To understand his/her role as a council member in assisting the pastor	Be in full and active communion with the Church, have a good prayer life, and have the desire to assist the pastor in helping the parish to grow

Question 3: Why is it important for the Parish Pastoral Council members to have a basic knowledge of the responsibilities of the pastor?	Question 10: What, in your opinion, are some qualities that prospective members of the Parish Pastoral Council should possess?
[So that] council members can fill the gaps and needs in other areas (#283)	Need to be involved in some of the things that happen in the parish [in order] to be able to know the needs of all parishioners, be prayerful and Spirit-filled (#283)
To understand where he is coming from when he speaks to council (#282)	Honestly, integrity, compassion, kind[ness], open[ness] (#282)

Session II: *Nature and Purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council*
Post-Test Responses to Open-Ended Questions

Question 3: Why is it important/unimportant for Parish Pastoral Council members to have a basic knowledge of the responsibilities of the pastor?	Question 10: What qualities do you bring to the Parish Pastoral Council?
The council needs to assist the pastor in administering... the needs of the parish. A knowledge of these needs will help [to] make sure that parishioners, ministries and committees are taken care of to the best of our ahilit[y].	I am hoping that through prayer, devotion and hard work, I can give back to my church what it gives to me.
So that we can advise to the best of our ability	Openness to listen and learn, a link to the people of the parish, a desire to get people motivated about this parish
Again, to understand our duties and limits	I'm open to the ideas and plans [that] the PPC's members may have, and am willing to be an active participant.
To understand their own responsibilities/to know their limitations	I attend church regularly and talk to members of the church. I am willing to learn about all aspects of the church and formulate my own opinions to share with the pastor.
A support group (sic)	Years of volunteer service, years of living in the community, [and] want[ing] our parish to become more spiritual
To understand how to work together	Community interests
To better understand his/her role as a consultative member of the council	I understand the pastor's role as shepherd and I love the Catholic Church.
To understand where he comes from when he speaks	Honesty, compassion, integrity
To know the day to day needs of the parish members and [to] know [whom] to go to... to find help in these areas	Spiritual and prayerful working with youth [for] 20 years and management for over 17 years
The basic knowledge of the job of pastor is important when advising or offering suggestions for the Church	A regular attendance at church that is open to the grace of God to follow in the path he wants

Session III: *Pastoral Planning*
Responses to Pre-Test Open-Ended Questions

Question 10: What are some obstacles to parish pastoral planning?	Question 11: What do you believe is the mission of our parish?	Question 12: What are some ways for assessing the needs of our parish?
Correctly identifying areas that require attention	To provide spiritual [and] emotional support for our parishioners	Use of the Vibrant Parish Life survey
• Getting everyone to agree • Coming up with what is most important for all • Once you figure everything out, how do you go about doing it?	To help guide as many people as possible in the ways of Jesus	Ask the parish[ioners] what they want and listen!!
Different views of what faith is and how it is to be acted [up]on, and short-sight[ed]ness in not only spiritual but financial future	To provide a safe place for our parishioners to grow in their faith and relationship with Jesus Christ	Face-to-face with the people in our parish and a strong pastor and council to help define [sic] those needed
Diversity of those who represent the parish on the council; not being open-minded to the needs of all ages of parish [sic]	To bring opportunities to the parish that will increase education of our faith, involvement in our parish, and ultimately to grow closer to our Lord	Proper representation of parish members Listening and responding to the needs of the people
Trying to get everyone involved together at one time is difficult. We need input from all facets of the parish and its ministries and commissions for planning to be effective	To educate all of our members as to what our Church has to offer.... We need to be receptive to the needs of everyone.	Surveys rarely work. By talking to parishioners face-to-face, and attending a vast variety of functions and understanding what is happening within each aspect of the parish, we can better understand what is needed.

Question 10: What are some obstacles to parish pastoral planning?	Question 11: What do you believe is the mission of our parish?	Question 12: What are some ways for assessing the needs of our parish?
To have an accurate idea of the needs of the Church Planning for the future based on false information is never good	To foster a loving environment to help members of the church grow in their faith	[Vibrant] Parish Life Survey Open forums with members of the church Visits by our parish priest
Taking action: need to make decisions	To bring the community to be one with God	Networking with members, asking questions, surveys
People do not like change in general. Planning and setting goals means taking a realistic view of where you are and what has been done.	Bring the word of God to the people by having Mass, Bible study at church and visiting the sick at home; provide a welcoming place of worship for [Catholics both new and old]	Survey the population [sic] Asking people directly

Session III: *Parish Pastoral Planning*
Responses to Open-Ended Post-Test Questions

Question 10: How can we, as a parish, overcome any obstacles to parish pastoral planning?	Question 11: What are some of the things you have learned from Fr. Donnelly's several presentations on the Parish Pastoral Council?	Question 12: What other issues, concerning Parish Pastoral Councils, would you like to see covered in the future?
Patience	I think most of this is common sense, but everything has been defined well	How do we overcome issues such as *lack of direction,* if other members of Pastoral Council are willing to work?
By organizing and planning properly and only taking on what we can handle at the time	I have learned that as a part of Parish Council, it is important for me to understand what the parish needs and also how the pastor wants to go about meeting those needs and to help to the best of my ability.	I can't think of anything now.
To plan [a] three to five year future and complete what we plan	I indeed know more about what council is to do and how it interacts with the pastor.	
Be careful [about] how many goals we set. Involve and inform parish members.	I was not present at the previous two presentations, but I have a clear picture of why we need to implement pastoral planning for the growth of our parish	More complete reporting of all parish ministries and programs by commission-heads (#304)
We need to be more receptive to the needs of *all* of our parishioners and commit ourselves to overcoming those obstacles together.	I have learned the true dynamic of the way a council *should* be! Great teachings.... I hope we can work together to implement all of our ideas and meet our goals.	How can we all educate (re-educate?) ourselves better to help those who seek us out... on basic Catholic doctrine? Some people always need a refresher.

Question 10: How can we, as a parish, overcome any obstacles to parish pastoral planning?	Question 11: What are some of the things you have learned from Fr. Donnelly's several presentations on the Parish Pastoral Council?	Question 12: What other issues, concerning Parish Pastoral Councils, would you like to see covered in the future?
Faith and trust in the Lord.... People with both will overcome the obstacles if they wish to formulate a plan.	The Parish Pastoral Council is a committee [sic] that helps the pastor [to] guide the church and meet the needs of the people.	Seeing or reviewing a working, vibrant council [sic]
Working through differences within the council with the best interests of the church in mind.... Present well thought out solutions and involve more members.	I have learned that the priest is the main [governor] of the parish. However, he needs Pastoral Council to give him good information about the parish in order to make good decisions and goals for our future.	How are we doing? What goals does Fr. Donnelly wish for our future?
Develop an action plan, set goals and have a mission.	With proper planning, this Pastoral Council can help guide the parish to be a vibrant church. This Parish Pastoral Council is important to [the] success of following [the] mission statement.	Detailed examples of each phase of planning

APPENDIX G
LIST OF NORMS
FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS[1]

Diocese of Cleveland

EXISTENCE

1. Every parish of the Diocese of Cleveland is to have a Parish Pastoral Council.

NATURE

2. The Parish Pastoral Council is a consultative body which makes recommendations to the Pastor.

AUTHORITY

3. The Pastor is to preside over the Parish Pastoral Council.

4. The Pastor is to consult the Parish Pastoral Council on matters of major pastoral concern.

PURPOSE

5. The purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council is to promote the spiritual growth of the parish community and to plan ways for the parish to carry out the mission of the Church.

MEMBERSHIP

6. The members of the Parish Pastoral Council represent the interests and pastoral needs of the parish community.

7. Membership on the Parish Pastoral Council, except for those who are members by reason of their office, is to be determined in an appropriate manner which allows for the participation of the parish community.

8. Membership of the Parish Pastoral Council, except for those who are members by reasons of their office, shall have a limited term.

ROLES

9. The Parish Pastoral Council is to select a Chairperson and other Officers from among its members.

STRUCTURES

10. The Parish Pastoral Council works with existing parish groups and forms new groups as needed to promote the spiritual growth of the parish and foster the mission of the Church.

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[1] *Cleveland PPC Policy*, 32.

APPENDIX H
CANON LAW, THE PASTOR, PASTORAL PLANNING AND PARISH COUNCILS[1]

One way to understand the nature of "pastoral," is to refer to Canons 528 and 529 of the Revised Code of Canon Law (1983). Here the Church presented the "pastoral responsibilities" of the parish priest. Pastoral Planning is one way in which all the baptized share in these responsibilities. The Parish Pastoral Council is "the most promising way to make sure such participation occurs" (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, "The Parish: A People, A Mission, A Structure," 1980.) For convenience, the responsibilities are listed according to the threefold mission of Jesus as Prophet, Priest, and King.

Pastoral Responsibilities of the Parish Priest

SUMMARY Canon 528

PROPHET (Teaching, Word)

1. **Preaching**
The Pastor is obligated to see to it that the word of God in its entirety is announced to those living in the parish; for this reason he is to see to it that the lay Christian faithful are instructed in the truths of the faith, especially through the homily which is to be given on Sundays and holy days of obligation and

2. **Catechetics**
through the catechetical formation which he is to give;

3. **Works promoting Gospel**
he is to foster works by which the spirit of the gospel, including issues involving social justice, is promoted;

4. **Catholic education**
he is to take speeial care for the Catholic education of children and young adults;

5. **Evangelization**
he is to make every effort with the aid of the Christian faithful, to bring the gospel message also to those who have ceased practicing their religion or who do not profess the true faith.

PRIEST (Sanctifying, Worship, Sacrament)

6. **Eucharist at center**
The pastor is to see to it that the Most Holy Eucharist is the center of the parish assembly of the faithful;

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[1] Cleveland PPC Policy, 33-35.

7. **Nourish laity by devout celebration; especially frequent Eucharist and Penance**
he is to work to see to it that the Christian faithful are nourished through a devout celebration of the sacraments and especially that they frequently approach the sacraments of the Most Holy Eucharist and the sacrament of Penance;

8. **Develop prayer in family, participation in liturgy**
he is likewise to endeavor that they are brought to the practice of family prayer as well as a knowing and active participation in the sacred liturgy,

9. **Supervise liturgy under bishop, guard against abuse**
which the pastor must supervise in his parish under the authority of the diocesan bishop, being vigilant lest any abuses creep in.

SUMMARY Canon 529

KING, SHEPHERD, SERVANT (Governing, Care, Enablement, Administration)

10. **Visit faithful**
In order to fulfill his office in earnest the pastor should strive to come to know the faithful who have been entrusted to his care; therefore he is to visit families, sharing the cares, worries, and especially the griefs of the faithful, strengthening them in the Lord, and correcting them prudently if they are wanting in certain areas;

11. **Minister to sick, dying**
with generous love he is to help the sick, particularly those close to death, refreshing them solicitously with the sacraments and commending their souls to God;

12. **Seek out poor, afflicted, lonely, exiled**
he is to make a special effort to seek out the poor, the afflicted, the lonely, those exiled from their own land and similarly those weighed down with special difficulties;

13. **Support, strengthen marriage and Christian family living**
he is also to labor diligently so that spouses and parents are supported in fulfilling their proper duties, and he is to foster growth in the Christian life within the family.

14. **Foster religious associations that develop the lay role in the Church's "mission"**
The pastor is to acknowledge and promote the proper role which the lay members of the Christian faithful have in the Church's mission by fostering their associations for religious purposes;

15. **Model and promote concern for parish, diocesan, and universal "communion"**
he is to cooperate with his own bishop and with the presbyterate of the diocese in working hard so that the faithful be concerned for parochial communion and that they realize that they are members both of the diocese and of the universal Church and participate in and support efforts to promote such communion.

SUMMARY Canon 536

16. **Pastoral Council**
After the diocesan bishop has listened to the presbyteral council and if he judges it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish; the pastor presides over it, and through it the Christian faithful along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity. The pastoral council processes a consultative vote only and is governed by norms determined by the diocesan bishop.

Canon 537

17. **Finance Council**
Each parish is to have a finance council which is regulated by universal law as well as by norms issued by the diocesan bishop; in this council the Christian faithful, selected according to the same norms, aid the pastor in the administration of parish goods with due regard for the prescriptions of Canon 532 (i.e., The pastor represents the parish in all juridic affairs in accord with the norm of law; he is to see to it that the goods of the parish are administered in accord with the norms of Canons 1281-1288).

ADDITIONAL CANONS CONCERNING RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARISH PASTOR[2]

Canon 519
The parish priest is the proper pastor of the parish entrusted to him. He exercises the pastoral care of the community entrusted to him under the authority of the diocesan Bishop, whose ministry of Christ he is called to share, so that for this community he may carry out the office of teaching, sanctifying and ruling with the cooperation of other priests or deacons and with the assistance of lay members of Christ's faithful, in accordance with the law.

Canon 530
The functions especially entrusted to the parish priest are as follows:

1. the administration of baptism;
2. the administration of the sacrament of confirmation to those in danger of death...;
3. the administration of Viaticum and of the anointing of the sick,... and the imparting of the apostolic blessing;
4. the assistance at marriages and the nuptial blessing;
5. the conducting of funerals;
6. the blessing of the baptismal font at paschal time, the conduct of processions outside the church, and the giving of solemn blessings outside the church;
7. the more solemn celebration of the Eucharist on Sundays and holydays of obligation.

[2] *Code of Canon Law Annotated*, 382 and 390.

APPENDIX I

THE PASTORAL COUNCIL, THE PASTORAL STAFF/TEAM AND THE FINANCE COUNCIL[1]

The pastoral planning work of Parish Pastoral Councils is to focus on how the ministries and activities of the parish foster the spiritual development of the parish and enable its outward mission to the world. The following comparison also illustrates some distinct areas addressed by the Pastoral Staff/Team and the Finance Council.

Pastoral Council
(Canon 536)

- Pastor presides
- Ministerial leaders
- Selected faithful

CONSULTATIVE
re:

What is needed in pastoral ministry. . .

So that all the baptized can grow spiritually and carry out the mission of the Church in the world

FUNCTIONS
through. . .

- Spiritual formation
- Pastoral planning
- Policy development
- Communication

Pastoral Staff/Team

- Pastor
- Ministerial leaders
- Priests, Deacons
- Paid staff
- Volunteer staff

COLLABORATIVE
re:

Pastoral Ministries of. . .
(Canons 528-529)

- Preaching
- Teaching
- Evangelizing
- Caring for the needy
- Working for justice
- Celebrating liturgy
- Enabling participation

IMPLEMENTS

- in harmony with Pastor
- in accord with goals set by Pastoral Council
- within Finance Council's identification or resources available

Finance Council
(Canon 537)

- Pastor (sole legal agent)
- Members with skills in finance, law and administration

CONSULTATIVE
re:

Administration of

- parish goods

[1] *Cleveland PPC Policy*, 40

FUNCTIONS through. . .

- Financial planning
- Budget preparation
- Monitoring legal issues

Pastoral Staff/Team

FOCUS on . . .

- Supervision, collaboration, coordination
- Daily ministries, decisions, actions
- Managing and administrating details of material, personnel, resources and scheduling

Finance Council

FOCUS on . . .

- Clarifying technical matters
- Offering expertise on prudent use of resources in conformity with civil law, diocesan policies, and canonical requirements (Canons 1280-1288)

Pastoral Council

FOCUS on . . .

- Evaluating how the parish enables members to live their faith at home, in the neighborhood and marketplace; asking how can we carry out Christ's mission in the world?
- Setting pastoral goals to carry forth mission and focus ministries
- Planning action steps to accomplish the goals
- Recommending pastoral policies and plans

APPENDIX J

DISTINCTION BETWEEN POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION[1]

Parish Pastoral Councils develop and recommend policy. Pastoral Staffs deal with administration. Council Commissions may recommend policy to the Council in their area of expertise (using the principle of subsidiarity), but Commissions also implement policies of the Council and may do some administrative tasks delegated to them, particularly in small parishes. Some "rules of thumb":

Policy-recommendation: Council/Commissions
Issues that will impact the future:
Ongoing issues
Makes plans for long-range goals
Formulated at Council meetings

Administration: Staff/Committees
Issues that will arise next week; immediate demands
Issues that occur once only
Deals with regular programs
Takes place outside of meetings

Pastor as policy-maker
Representative of the Bishop and Church policy
Member of the Pastoral Council; develops policy together with Council; is responsible for final approval of Council recommendations

Pastor as administrator
Representative of the Bishop and chief administrator of the parish
Delegates responsibility for administration to Staff, Commissions, Committees or individuals

THE PARTICIPATIVE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

RESEARCH & DATA GATHERING/NEEDS ASSESSMENT
(Council, Commissions & Staff, with input from parishioners)

DETERMINING SEVERAL ALTERNATIVES
(Commissions & Staffs with input from Council)

RECOMMENDING A POLICY
(Pastoral Council)

IMPLEMENTATION
(Pastor, Staff & Committees)

EVALUATION (Pastoral Council, Commissions & Staff)

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[1] *Cleveland PPC Policy*, 42.

APPENDIX K
APPEAL PROCESS WHEN A COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION IS NOT APPROVED[1]

When a Council continually seeks to build consensus in its deliberations, rarely would a Pastor not approve a Council recommendation. Differences of opinion which may arise are resolved ideally at the local level when they occur. However, the following procedure is offered as an appeal process when major disagreements might exist:

- If the Pastor decides after prayer and reflection not to approve a Council recommendation or to withhold implementation, he expresses this decision to the Council and gives his reasons as fully as possible.

- If the Council has serious difficulty with accepting the Pastor's decision, the Chairperson may poll the Council as to whether they wish to accept the decision and drop the matter.

- If the Council wishes to pursue the matter, it is placed on the agenda for the next meeting. The Pastor and all concerned persons study the issue further and prepare any further relevant data or insights.

- At the next meeting, the Council prayerfully reviews the issue and the additional information provided. The recommendation may be revised in response to what is said. If the recommendation in question is passed again by two-thirds of the members present (providing there is a quorum) and is still not approved by the Pastor, the issue can be referred to the Regional Bishop. Either the Chairperson of the Council or the Pastor can initiate the referral.

[1] *Cleveland PFC Policy*, 43.

APPENDIX L
PERSPECTIVES ON CONSENSUS[1]

1. One statement of consensus: A group process of seeking substantial though not necessarily unanimous agreement on a significant matter. The group strives to attain a conclusion which all can support, even if some still disagree. Consensus can be described in the following way: "I understand what most of you would like to do. I personally would not do that, but I feel that you understand what my alternative would be. I have had sufficient opportunity to openly share my thoughts and feelings. I feel that I have been listened to, but I clearly have not been able to sway you to my point of view. Therefore, I will support what most of you wish to do."

2. In seeking consensus, the key value is to reach an optimal level of agreement and support. This contrasts with the concern to make a decision expediently, however divided people might be.

3. The concern to reach consensus has a profound impact upon how a group goes about its work. The desire for consensus leads to seeking participation by all members of the group and by others who will also be impacted by the outcome. Input is used to shape and reshape a proposal based upon what is said.

4. If we choose to build consensus, we first need to build relationships which will enable consensus to happen. Building an atmosphere of openness and truth is essential for a group seeking consensus. Otherwise people often end up with a false consensus. For example, if one asks, "Does everyone agree?" or "Does anyone disagree?" it may be that few people respond. However, there well may be people who do not feel comfortable expressing disagreement, especially if an atmosphere of honesty has not been created.

5. In order to understand each person's position on a proposal after it has been discussed, the Consultative Ballot (D – 2) can be used.[2] The Council Executive Committee or the group submitting the proposal carefully studies the ballots and develops a revised proposal for discussion at the next meeting.

6. One further test for consensus, aside from using the consultative ballot, is to ask each person to say the word 'yes' or 'no' to the proposal under study. If anyone says anything other than 'yes' they often mean some degree of 'no'. People who feel reluctant to openly disagree may implicitly express their reluctance by using words like 'yeah', 'sure', 'ok', 'um' and so forth.

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[1] Cleveland PPC Policy, 45.
[2] See appendix, 155.

7. If we cannot agree on the problem, it is very unlikely we will ever agree on a solution. Consensus-building happens in steps, i.e. seeking consensus on:

   what is the purpose of each meeting or discussion
   what is the problem or concern
   what are some possible responses
   what is the best response

8. In one from of the consensus process, each person is asked to:

- Prepare his/her own position as well as possible before the meeting and realize that the task is incomplete until the viewpoints are supplied by the other members of the council. Each person has a part of the truth. To do this preparation, each member should have the agenda and proposal under study at least seven days before the meeting.
- Recognize an obligation to express his/her own opinion and explain it fully so that the rest of the council will have the benefit of all the members thinking.
- Recognize an obligation to listen to the opinion and feelings of all the other members and to be ready to modify his/her own position on the basis of logic, understanding and sensitivity.
- Avoid conflict-reducing techniques such as voting, compromising, or giving in to keep the peace, and to realize that differences of opinion are both helpful and often present. In exploring differences the best course of action will gradually make itself apparent. Consensus begins only when members are ready to really listen and are open to modifying their positions.

9. Consensus almost always takes more time at the beginning than other methods. However, it can also he more 'efficient' than other methods when we consider a longer term perspective that includes effective implementation and positive community impact. Decisions that are made quickly but do not receive support in the implementation phase are seldom effective or efficient.

10. It is also important to be clear about 'who makes what decision in what ways.' This is an excellent area for dialogue at the very beginning of any significant consensus process. Otherwise the unspoken expectations about roles in the consensus process can lead to frustration and disappointment as different people or groups feel they were excluded or ignored. Some issues will require the consensus of a particular group. Other issues will warrant only informational updates on what is happening.

11. Consensus is often more time-consuming than simple voting. While voting allows for all members of the group to participate before a conclusion is reached, it is also competitive and tends to produce winners and losers. Furthermore, voting tends to become legalistic.

12. Some guidelines for successful use of the consensus method are:

- The proper attitude for consensus requires a desire to arrive at a common conclusion and a willingness to compromise. This compromise is not yielding to an inferior solution, but recognizing the validity of another point of view. Members may disagree, but should avoid being argumentative.

13. Before they are enacted, recommendations of the Parish Pastoral Council need to be accepted by the Pastor. If the Pastor and Councilors deal with issues openly and honestly from the beginning of the consensus process, in a consistent environment of mutual respect, disagreements on issues will be minimized and an exceptional disagreement will not damage the relationship between Pastor and Council.

CONSULTATIVE BALLOT[3]

Tile of Proposal

_____

Number of Proposal

_____

Date

_____

Name

_____

Please check one:

_____ (strong yes) Yes, I am in favor of this proposal as it stands

_____ (weak yes) I am generally in favor of this proposal but would recommend that the Commission/person presenting this proposal consider the following point(s). I do not consider it necessary for the proposal to be brought back to the group after the above recommendations have been considered.

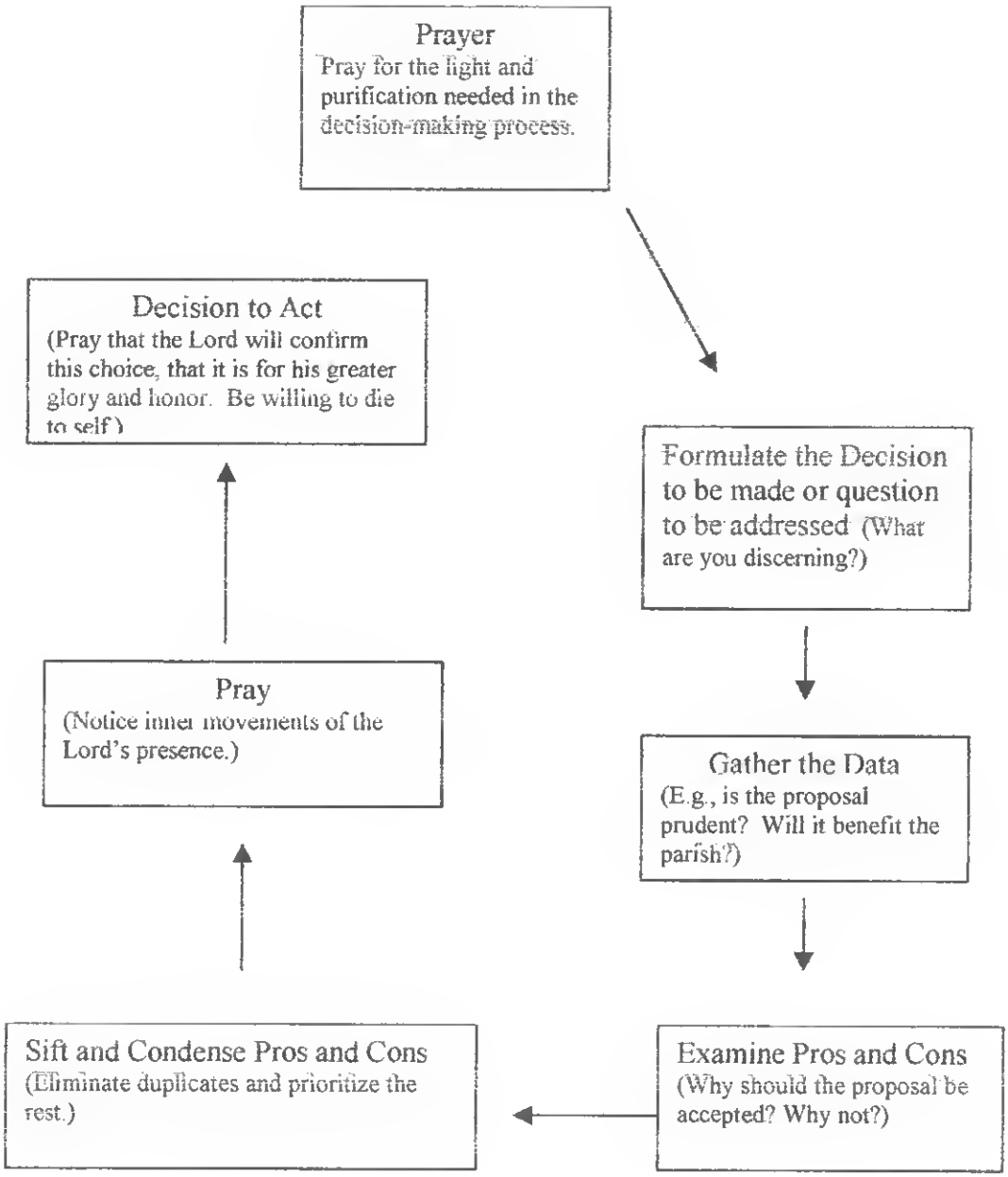
_____ (neutral) I am somewhat in favor of this proposal but I would like to see the following changes made before I give my support. I would like the proposal brought back to the total group after these changes have been made.

_____ (weak no) I am generally opposed to this proposal for the following reasons. If great urgency or expediency makes it impossible to draft another proposal for our next meeting, I will allow temporary implementation of this proposal with the understanding that a new proposal will be developed and presented as soon as possible.

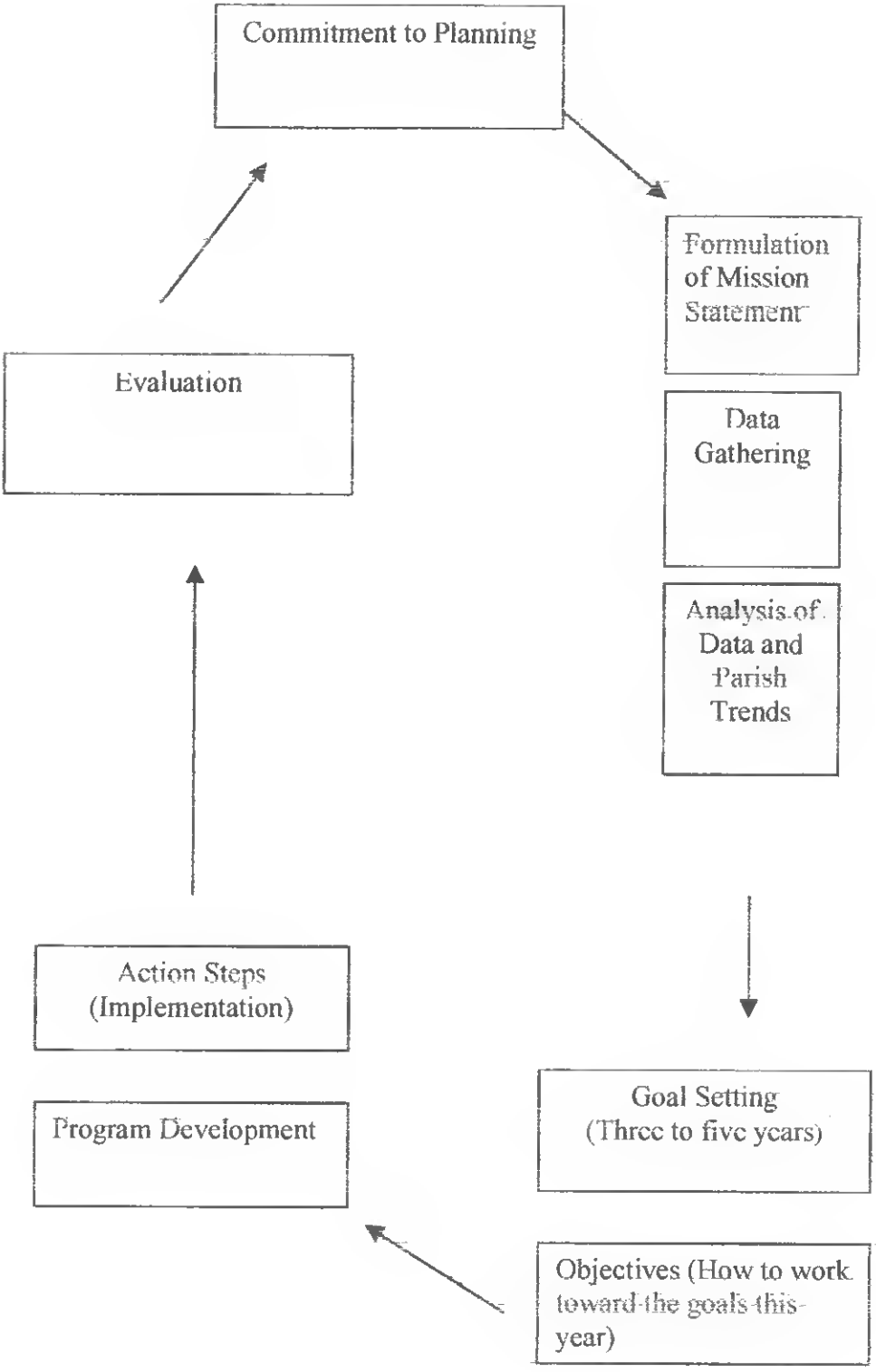
_____ (strong no) No, I do not accept the proposal as it stands. The following are my reasons and/or my suggested alternative proposal(s).

[3] *Cleveland PPC Policy*, 44.

APPENDIX M
DISCERNMENT



APPENDIX N
WHAT IS PASTORAL PLANNING?



Selected Bibliography

Archdiocese of Detroit. *Come Holy Spirit: Practical Prayer for Parish Meetings.* Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1994.

The workbook is intended for use by parish groups that meet monthly. The services can be used over a period of ten months. The scripture readings, songs and prayer reflections used in each service, are consistent with various liturgical and seasonal themes. The publication consists of 110 pages.

Bausch, William J. *The Parish of the Next Millenium.* Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1997.

"The book is a summary of data that leads to certain conclusions. It is a summary of analyses of the social and cultural forces that are shaping our lives and our Church.... It pulls together in one book current research and polls and issues that try to tell us where we are and where we might be going as a church [sic] and society" (pp. 1f). The parish of the next millenium will be less program oriented and more spiritually oriented, there will be a retrieval of the Catholic imagination, there will be more emphasis on intergenerational learning, and there will be more creative ways to attend to men.

Blochlinger, Alex. The Modern Parish Community. New York: P.J. Kenedy and Sons, 1965.

Blochlinger examines the historical development of the parish, as well as the notion of parish as a community, from the standpoint of canon law, theology, and liturgy.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church. 2nd ed. Vatican City-State: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997.

The Catechism is an authoritative compilation of the Catholic Church's teachings on the Creed, the Commandments, the sacraments and prayer. Chapter 9, of the section on the Creed is entitled: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." This chapter is a particularly useful resource in the area of ecclesiology.

Christ Calls us Together, Parish Pastoral Council Policy for the Diocese of Cleveland. Cleveland, 1990.

The handbook is the latest revision of the Diocese's policy and suggestions for the continued development of parish pastoral councils. There are ten norms listed. The second explains the purpose of the council as being the promotion of the spiritual growth of the parish and to plan ways for the parish to carry out the mission of the Church. The parish council fulfills its purpose by working with existing parish groups and forming new groups as needed.

Cleary, William. *Psalm Services for Group Prayer*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1993.

The prayer services connect the psalms with the realities of daily life, as well as illuminating facets of the mystery of God: gathering, searching, discovery, light, joy, faith, etc. Each session includes various ways of praying. There are scripture readings, group prayer, meditations, etc. The prayer services are designed to enhance any parish meeting. The book is 81 pages.

Caparros, E., M. Theriault, and J. Thorn, eds. *Code of Canon Law Annotated.* Montreal: Wilson and Lafleur Limitee, 1993.

The faculty of Canon Law at the University of Navarra (Spain) and the University of St. Paul (Canada) collaborated on this edition of the latest revision (1983) of the Catholic Church's legislative corpus. The code is a necessary reference for establishing juridical provisions for various structures, processes, and rights pertinent to the Church and its mission.

Congar, Yves. *Lay People in the Church*. Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, Inc. 1985.

Congar develops the theology of the laity, specifically covering the priestly, prophetic and kingly aspects of the lay vocation.

Coriden, James A. *The Parish in Catholic Tradition*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997.

Msgr. Coriden examines history, theology and canon law concerning the nature and purpose of the parish. Of particular value for the project at hand are chapters five through eight. The parish pastoral council is one example of canon law regarding parishioners as more than passive recipients of pastoral care. The council is supposed to help and foster pastoral activity. Msgr. Coriden provides an overview of what the code includes as activities that are obligatory or at least appropriate for parishes (pp. 66ff). The author also lists twelve rights and duties of the parish community (cf.c. 6). One such right is that of pastoral ministry and leadership. "The congregation should participate in the pastoral and financial direction of its affairs through consultation.... The parish pastoral council and finance council are meant to be instruments for this consultation (cc. 536-537, 1280)" (p. 76).

Davis, Charles. "The Parish and Theology." *The Clergy Review* (May, 1964): 265-290.

Davis's article, although pessimistic in tone, is helpful because he reviews various attempts to understand the parish theologically. He looks at the contributions of Blcchinger, Congar, Rahner, and others. Davis also analyzes the 1917 Code of Canon Law's defects in its definition of parish: it fails to include the people in its explanation. The defect would later be rectified in the revised Code of 1983. The Doctor of Ministry project will examine the parish from the point of view of theology and canon law.

Deegan, A., ed. *Developing a Vibrant Pastoral Parish Council.* Clearwater, FL: Conference for Pastoral Planning, 1994.

Deegan has compiled a collection of instructional essays on developing and maintaining a PPC. It is a practical handbook that reviews pastoral planning (including a how to do primer), how a PPC should work, stumbling blocks to successful operation of a council, prayer and spirituality of the council, and how to evaluate a council (there are two assessment instruments included).

Dulles, Avery. *Models of the Church.* Rev. ed. New York, NY: Doubleday, 2002.

Dulles proposes the use of models as a theological method for understanding the mystery of the Church. He has developed five: the Church as institution, mystical communion, sacrament, herald, and servant. He examines the strengths and weaknesses of each. My theology chapter is indebted to Dulles.

_____ and Patrick Granfield. *The Theology of the Church: A Bibliography.* New York: Paulist Press, 1999.

Since the Second Vatican Council, the amount of literature on the mission, nature and structure of the Church has been prodigious. This book attempts to provide a selection of the most important ecclesiological writings from the New Testament era and the patristic age, through the year 1998. The bibliography is limited to books, although the reader can find periodical references in many of the books. Books were selected on the basis of historical value, readability and utility.

Faley, Roland, J. "One Parish's Adventure in Pastoral Planning." *Today's Parish* (Sept./Oct 2003): 14-15.

The parish of St. Edward the Confessor in Syosset, New York holds a series of meetings on Thursday evenings during Lent. The meetings, open to the public, are entitled, "Where does the Church go from here?" The consensus included suggestions as to more opportunities for continuing education, outreach to

Catholics whose only connection with the parish is the Sunday Mass, outreach to non-practicing Catholics, focus groups to assist parishioners in dealing with specific issues in the workplace.

Fischer, Mark F. and Mary Margaret Raley, eds. *Four Ways to Build More Effective Parish Councils.* Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2002.

"This collection of essays offers an explanation [as to why pastoral councils are an important part of American Catholic life] and it presents four principles that make councils even more effective. Effective councils understand their job, involve the right people, research pastoral matters, and plan for the future" (p.1.). David DeLambo and Rick Krivanka contribute a chapter on appreciative inquiry.

Fisher, Mark F. "When Should a Pastor Not Consult the Council?" *Today's Parish* (March 1992): 18-20.

This article helps one understand consultation, from a practical standpoint. The pastor does not have to consult the PPC for every matter that comes to his attention. Yet, there are circumstances when consultation is necessary.

_____. "If I were Starting a Pastoral Council..." *Today's Parish* (Sept. 2000): 14-17.

The author presents his ideas for what to include in constitutions and bylaws, or, as he prefers to call them "foundation documents". He uses the term as more consistent with what is provided in Canon Law. Also, he allows for a three-year term without staggered election of council members. Each three-year term constitutes a planning cycle. The "foundation document" of the parish council consists of an introduction, statement of purpose, statement of scope, criteria for membership, etc.

Flannery, Austin, ed. *Vatican Council II: the Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents.* Wilmington, Del: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1975.

The decree on the ministry of bishops, *Christus Dominus* (#27) speaks of pastoral councils at the diocesan level. The decree on the laity, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (#26) speaks of "apostolic councils" on the parochial level. The concept is as yet undeveloped. The nature of the council is described as "the clergy and the religious working together in whatever way proves satisfactory". The constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, provides a justification for such lay involvement (cf. Nos. I-IV), and without developing the idea of a PPC per se, states the following. "The pastors, indeed, should recognize and promote the dignity and responsibility of the laity in the Church. They should willingly use their prudent advice.... They should with paternal love consider attentively in Christ initial moves, suggestions and desires proposed by the laity" (cf. 1 Thes 5.19 and 1Jn 4.1). Further, "[Pastors] helped by the experience of the laity, are in

a position to judge more clearly and appropriately in spiritual as in temporal matters" (#37).

Forster, Patricia M. and Thomas P. Sweetser, S.J. Transforming the Parish: Models for the Future. Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1993.

The authors present a practical guide who offers ideas and suggestions as to what parish life could be, while paying attention to what parish life is. The book is the result of 20 years of research with parishes of the U.S., via the Parish Evaluation Project. There are 214 pages divided into 14 chapters. Chapter three is entitled "Underlying Spirituality". The book has an index and bibliography.

Gubish, MaryAnn and Susan Jenny. *Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council.* Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2001.

This is meant to be used as a workbook. It contains factual information, reflection sheets and sample materials. The authors cover the topics of prayer, the seven elements of parish life, a guide for pastoral planning and ministry leadership issues.

Gull, Thomas F. *The Complete Parish: A Recipe for Success.* Schiller Park, IL: J. S. Paluch Co., 2003

The first principle in putting together an effective parish program is a current and complete database with information about the parishioners. The book explains how to put such a database together. The second principle is that utilizing the database correctly is the key both to judging the needs for a particular program and the means whereby one can attract a potential audience. Gull's book employs demographic analysis as a basis for parish strategic planning.

Harms, William C. *Who are we and where are we Going? A Guide to Parish Planning.* New York, NY: Sadlier, 1981.

Harms offers a complete guide to pastoral planning. He reviews the principles of planning, how to write a mission statement, how to gather data on the parish community, how to analyze the data, how to set goals, how to specify objectives, how to develop and implement programs, and how to evaluate the plan. He includes a workbook to assist in the actual creation of a parish's Action Plan. The workbook may be reproduced. The work consists of 112 pages in a three ring binder format.

Harrington, Donal and Julie Kavanagh. *Prayer for Parish Groups*. Winona, MN: Christian Brothers Publications.

The volume includes 100 prayer services. The services allow for adaptation for specific needs. Many themes are covered, including the seasons of the calendar and Church year, as well as important moments in one's life.

Jeselson, Mary Ann and Carole G. Rogers. *Great Ideas from Great Parishes: A Parish Handbook*. Liguori, MO: Ligouri, 2003.

"The book is organized around seven themes that must be part of every parish's mission: evangelization, faith formation, liturgy and sacramental life, ministry, social justice, spirituality, and stewardship. Within each theme [one] will find a variety of practical ideas from a variety of sources. [The authors] first describe each idea as it has worked in a particular parish setting. [They] then follow with a list of basic how-to guidelines that will help [one] implement a similar project in [his] parish. For some ideas there is further assistance in a list of resources or companion prayers and readings" (p. xii).

Kennedy, Robert T. "Shared Responsibility and Decision Making." *Studia Canonica* 15 (1980): 5-23.

Kennedy addresses the need for training in ecclesial governance. His article pre-dates the revised Code of Canon Law (1983), but it anticipates the development of Church structures of collaborative decision-making, such as the Parish Pastoral Council. He provides a process for corporate decision-making which can be useful for developing an understanding of the mechanics of parish pastoral planning.

Kilian, Sabbas. *Theological Models for the Parish*. New York, NY: Alba House, 1977.

Kilian analyzes the parish via the use of theological models. He develops five such models: a community gathered to hear the word of God, a community gathered together to celebrate the Eucharist, a local organization of the universal Church, a community structured into small subcommunities, and the American parish as agent of change.

Malphurs, Aubrey. *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 1999.

Malphurs offers a comprehensive look at strategic planning for today's church.... The author's contention is that the typical church in North America is like a sailboat without a rudder. Church's without plans invariably stagnate. The plan helps churches to focus on purpose, mission, values, vision, and strategy. There are eleven chapters, appendices, notes and index.

Miller, J. Michael. *The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations of Pope John Paul II.* Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1998.

Of value here is the exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, which is a further development of Vatican II's theology of the laity.

O'Connor, James, ed. "Pastoral Councils." The Canon Law Digest, vol. VIII: (page nos.).

In 1973, the Congregation for the Clergy issued *Omnes Christifideles*, the first official document to mention explicitly parish pastoral councils, and the only post-conciliar document of its type to deal exclusively with pastoral councils. Whereas the thrust of the document concerns the diocesan pastoral council as an aid to the bishop, section I I states: "The fathers of the plenary congregation, taking into consideration the nature of the diocesan pastoral council, feel that there is nothing to prevent the institution within the diocese of councils of the same nature and function, whether parochial or regional as they are called...." This document provides important material for presenting the genesis of the PPC.

Page, Roch. *The Diocesan Pastoral Council.* Paramus, NJ: Newman Press, 1970.

The book examines the obscurity of Vatican II's origination of the parish pastoral council.

Paddock, Susan Star. *Appreciative Inquiry in the Catholic Church.* Plano, TX: The Book Publishing Co., 2003.

Appreciative Inquiry is a "strength-based model of action research – 'what works around here; what might be, what should be; let's innovate what will be." (p.4). The five D's in AI are define the focus of the inquiry, discover what is, dream about what might be, design what should be, deliver (create). AI can be used in strategic planning and for creating mission statements (c. 4). It can be used for spiritual renewal.

Parise, Michael. "Forming your Parish Pastoral Council." The *Priest* (July 1995): 43-47.

Parise provides a look at the content and format that can be used for PPC formation. The author used this approach for forming lay leadership in his parish. His sources include the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Dulles's *Models of the Church*, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, and the U.S. Bishops' *Go and Make Disciples*. It is a practical program that can and should be adapted according to need.

Parish Pastoral Council Handbook. Diocese of Nashville: Ministry Formation Services, 2004.

The Diocese of Nashville has a comprehensive guide that can be used to understand the nature and purpose of the PPC. The guide also covers principles of operating a council, and how to go about the business of pastoral planning. The appendices include a section on discernment, resources and a bibliography for further research.

Pastoral Planning: A Guide for Parishes. (Unpublished draft, Diocese of Cleveland, undated.)

The handbook is intended to assist parish leaders in understanding and using strategic planning. The presentation includes principles for effective parish strategic planning and a basic model for planning which consists of six steps. The steps are preparation, listening, special studies, mission and goals, action plan and evaluation. There are worksheets to assist in implementing a strategic plan and assessing the five areas of parish life, along with assessment of parish finances and review of parish facilities.

"Patterns in Local Pastoral Councils." *Origins* (Sept. 13, 1973): 186-190.

Origins prints the text and commentary of the Vatican letter on pastoral councils (see O'Connor above).

Rademacher, William J. *The New Practical Guide for Parish Councils.* Mystic, CN: Twenty-Third Publications, 1997.

The book covers material that will be useful for the theology chapter of the DMin project: how serving on the PPC is a ministry (c. 3), the nature and the purpose of the PPC (c.4), a discussion as to what the Church means by consultation, as it is specified in the revised Code of Canon Law (c. 5), the duties of the pastor (c. 6), the mission of the parish and PPC (c. 7), etc.

Ratzinger, Joseph. "The Ecclesiology of the Constitution on the Church, Vatican II, 'Lumen Gentium'." L'Osservatore Romano (Sept. 19, 2001): 5-8.

Any true ecclesiology is first and foremost *theological.* We must begin with the mystery of God, in order to understand the nature and purpose of the Church. To do otherwise is to reduce the Church to being merely the people. This reduction makes for the politicization of the Church, with its effects on the mindset of members of parishes and parish structures.

Renken, John A. "Pastoral Councils: Pastoral Planning and Dialogue Among the People of God," *The Jurist* (1993), 132-154.

Renken, a canon lawyer, presents a history of Church legislation pertinent to PPC's. In the second half of the article he reviews the nature and purpose of the PPC via seven insights. The insights develop the idea that the PPC exists to do pastoral planning. The PPC is collaborative and consultative. Members of the PPC share in the Church's mission based on the baptismal call.

Rodgers, Marliss, ed. *Weekly Prayer Services for Parish Meetings*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1994.

This publication is an easy to follow workbook that is based on the Sunday lectionary. There are reflections and questions that will allow for the councilors to share their faith with one another. Use of the workbook will contribute to growth in trust, spiritual development, and communication. There are 111 pages.

Scagnelli, Peter J. *Prayers for Sundays and Seasons*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1997.

The author's approach is to modify liturgical prayer for use at group meetings. The workbook includes scripture inspired prayer, lectionary references, general intercessions, the Lord's Prayer, etc. The format allows for listening to scripture readings and sharing faith-reflections. There are 192 pages.

Spiteri, Laurence J. *The Code in the Hands of the Laity*. New York: Alba House, 1997.

Spiteri reviews the Code of Canon Law, with the lay person in mind. Chapter three examines the notion of consultation as it is found in the Church's legislation. One segment of the Doctor of Ministry project deals with consultation.

Sweetser, Thomas P. and Carol Wisniewski Holden. *Leadership in a Successful Parish*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987.

The book offers ideas on strengthening parish leadership skills, defines the structure and workings of parish staffs and councils, provided models for more effective structures and efficient operation of a parish, and treats the subject of how to involve the laity more fully. The author includes do's and don't's that affect the parish's "productivity". Chapter 2 is entitled "Pastor: the Facilitator". There are 203 pages divided into eight chapters, along with a helpful index.

Sweetser, Thomas P., S.J. "A Dream, a Vision, a Plan... A Reality?" *Today's Parish* (Sept./Oct. 2003): 8-12.

One way parishes have developed a vision for the future is by holding a planning event "where people are encouraged to go beyond what *is* and think about what *could be*". The event is preceded by six months of preparation, gathering the insights and desires of the parish. During a two-week period, the parish leaders digest the information gathered. On the second weekend the pastor invites the parishioners to a town hall meeting to give everyone a chance to reflect on what was uncovered during the leadership meeting. On the final weekend the parish leaders meet to develop a three-year strategic plan.

_____. *The Parish as Covenant*. Franklin, Wisc: Sheed and Ward, 2001.

"Thomas J. Sweetser argues that contemporary parishes are 'caught in a Church system that is not working.'" He proposes a "dual-focus" system of parish leadership. (Cf. CIC #519.) The book consists of 182 pages divided into eight chapters. (Chapter four is about pastoral planning.) There is an index and bibliography included.

_____. *Successful Parishes: How they Meet the Challenges*. Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, 1983.

Fr. Sweetser presents portraits of seven parishes with new strategies and insights for the future, e.g., the black parish, the Hispanic parish, the city parish, the young, suburban parish, the well-established parish, the small town rural parish, etc. Chapter six concerns the "well-established parish". The book consists of 254 pages with bibliography.

Treston, Kevin. *Creative Christian Leadership*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1995.

Eight chapters explore leadership qualities, skills, spirituality, formation, etc. The author calls on leadership specialists in the field of psychology, sociology and management. He proposes theories and practices of leadership that are consistent with the gospel. "The scope of the book is designed to assist in the development of Christian leaders by providing commentary on nine key areas of Christian leadership. There are, in addition, suggested points for personal reflection on each of the nine areas" (p. 2). The book may be helpful as a practical tool in working with the parish council as a leader who is called to form leaders.

Vibrant Parish Life: Self-Study Resources. Cleveland, OH. No year given.

The Diocese of Cleveland has put together a self-study process for parishes so that a parish might assess the effectiveness of its various areas of ministry. The process includes methods of listening, how to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in pertinent areas of parish life (demographics, facilities, finances, ministries, staffing and liturgy) and how to develop a composite summary (profile) of parish life.

Winter, Michael. *Blueprint for a Working Church: A Study in New Pastoral Structures.* St. Meinrad's, IN: Abbey Press, 1973.

Winter suggests that many of the Church structures of present day (e.g., parish, diocese and religious order) are institutions of medieval vintage. It is important that we refashion our structures such that we can address three realities of today's world: that our society is largely irreligious, that we must apply the insights of Vatican II, and that people will be invited to give their assent to faith freely. The solution, he says, is to set up communities to replace the old structures.

Zech, Charles E. *The Parish Management Handbook.* Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2003.

This book concerns practical issues that arise in parish leadership. There are nine chapters. Each focuses on a specific issue. Mark Fischer writes a chapter on parish councils and parish management. Michael Cieslakis is responsible for a chapter entitled "The Consequences of Pastoral Leadership", which examines difference that pastoral leadership makes to the parish. He includes 34 items to be considered as indicators of parish vitality.